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INDIAN EXPERIENCES

Indian Experiences

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DECOST SMITH



ILLUSTRATED WITH DRAWINGS
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BY
THE AUTHOR



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DEDICATED TO THE
AMERICAN INDIAN

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INDIAN EXPERIENCES



Mirage

THE fascination of the mirage, like the rainbow, lies in its elusiveness and its illusion.

Niagara with all its grandeur is disappointing. It is too overpoweringly real. We view it at close range, hear its deafening roar, feel its spray in our faces. Hour after hour it remains the same, but the mirage, rhythmic symphony of shifting change, is always distant, permits no intimacies, no plumbing of depths, no measurements, no analysis.

Under favorable conditions we see it in its simplest form almost daily, yet scarcely notice it. Dry stretches of concrete highway sometimes appear to be covered with water, reflecting the bright metal of oncoming cars, or, on curves in the road, the rows of white posts along its edge. Often the wheels of the autos seem to spin in air, not touching the ground. Wide expanses, lakes and rivers, reveal more striking phases, though similar effects may be seen occasionally on city streets.

On the Western plains the mirage most commonly takes the form of apparent lakes bordered with trees of considerable size. On nearer approach one finds no lake, but only the sun-baked earth, while the trees in the shade of which the traveler had planned to rest resolve them-

selves into a few scraggly sagebrush taller than their fellows by a matter of mere inches. So deceptive are distances in this wavering air, pulsating as over a red-hot stove, that the illusory lake several miles ahead may turn out to be a parched mud flat only a few hundred yards away.

A mountain range at fifty or a hundred miles may stand out clearly in the rarefied upper air, while the intervening lower plains—artists would call it “the middle distance”—might well, to all appearance, be an inland sea with no more solidity than the sky which it reflects, which is as contrary to the accepted rules of atmospheric perspective as to all the canons of art.

But these modest manifestations are as nothing compared to what may be seen in certain favored regions, for at its fantastic, spectacular best the mirage, like the famed Fata Morgana of the Straits of Messina, seems to be characteristic of definite localities. Of this latter phenomenon the Dominican friar, Antonio Minasi, wrote in 1773 that he had seen it three times, and would rather behold it again than the most superb theatrical exhibition in the world. “On a sudden”—his description relates—he saw appear in the water “as in a catoptric theatre, various multiplied objects, *i.e.*, numberless series of pilasters, arches, castles well delineated, regular columns, lofty towers, superb palaces with balconies and windows, extended alleys of trees, delightful plains with herds and flocks, etc., all in their natural colours and proper action, and passing rapidly along the surface of the sea. And again,” he adds, “if the air be slightly hazy and opaque, and at the same time dewy and adapted to form the iris, then the objects will appear only at the surface of the sea, but they will be all vividly coloured or fringed with red, green, blue, and other prismatic colours.”

We shall not weary the reader and cheapen the mirage by an attempt to explain its causes or the difference between it and “looming.” Any good encyclopedia will do

that (though its diagrams leave us a trifle cold and unconvinced); suffice it to say, in spite of the fact that the savants of a hundred years ago had already reached the conclusion that "the phenomenon may be referred to natural causes," the Fata Morgana, as the name suggests, was attributed to the magic of Morgaine la fée, or Morgan the fairy, and there seems still to persist in the minds of many a vague notion that there is witchery in it.

Apparently the aridity of the great interior basin between the Rockies and the Cascade and the Sierra Nevada is especially suited to the mirage, and the Snake River Desert in Idaho particularly so.

Here, looking across the vast waterless expanse of lava and sagebrush, with its pools of water where no water is, trees where there are no trees, conical buttes along the shimmering skyline endlessly flowing, floating, blending into preposterous shapes, one might seem at times to be in some strange other world, but call the attention of a genuine old-timer to it and he will say in a disparaging tone, "Oh, that's just the mirage does that." With him it is an old story. He sees it almost daily, or would see it if he chanced to look up from his prospecting or other myopic pursuits. As a matter of fact, he pays less attention to it than to a fine sunset, for he does sometimes comment on that, but only as foretelling such and such weather for the morrow. Except, perhaps, when he sees the Teton Mountains over in Wyoming hanging head downward in the eastern sky, the mirage, like the meaningless pranks of a silly child, is entirely beneath his notice.

These topsy-turvy mountains I have seen but once, from a point a hundred and twenty miles to the west. At that distance the peaks are so small a detail of the landscape, and so delicate in tone, that an ordinary photograph probably would not show them at all. The present sketch is intended merely as a posterlike close-up to illustrate the main fact, that the mountains appeared to be reflected

upside down in the sky and that the inverted image seemed just as substantial and real as the mountains themselves.

As I watched the scene changed. The angular summits of the peaks grew slowly taller, like slender steeples or stalagmites, vapory at first, then more solid; taller and taller till they merged with similar prolongations lowered, like stalactites, as if to meet them from the reflection above. This process continued, the spaces of open sky between the upper and lower images diminishing gradually as these spread and approached each other, until only a few oval or circular loopholes remained between the two. Finally these closed, and with their closing the mountains disappeared completely from sight.

As a matter of fact, at the point on one of the Western ranges from which I then saw them, the Tetons are rarely visible except in the early morning with the sunrise behind them, or towards evening. This was late in the afternoon of an autumn day. The whole display lasted but a few minutes; probably if I had been a little earlier or later I should not have seen it.

In Irving's *Astoria* these peaks are called "the Three Tetons," and because they may be seen from great distances some of the Astorians named them "the Pilot Knobs." From certain angles only three peaks are visible, from others four, suggesting slightly the teats of a buffalo cow, hence no doubt the name, which in this case of course is French. This use of the word is not unusual, the Teton Butte, or Woman's Breast, from which the Teton River near Fort Benton derives its name, being another example.

There is unfortunate confusion due to the fact that there is another *teton* of identical spelling, but of totally different origin and meaning. This latter word is from the Sioux *Ti-ton-wan* [Prairie Dwellers], the name applied to that important division of the Dakota people which

roamed the plains toward the west, as distinguished from the Eastern bands.

To describe the mirage in words is hopeless, to picture it in immovable paint is hardly less so. Nevertheless, in the accompanying drawings I have tried to give some impression of this atmospheric distortion of Captain Bonneville's "Three Buttes," which stand far out in the desert plains north of Snake River. In doing so I have brought the buttes closer together than they really are, in order to show all three in one picture. In other respects the illustrations, based on sketches from nature made December 21, 1899, represent an honest effort to show what a mirage looks like.

When all is said, it must be admitted, the mirage is not a spectacle for all; at least, some seem never to see it. The truth is we see the things which interest us, others, though within our visual range, failing to register. There are men in the West who have killed unnumbered head of deer of both species who can't tell you the difference between the antlers of mule deer and whitetail; who have killed tons of antelope without noticing that the pronghorn has no dew claws. The carcasses were meat; hoofs and horns, not being eatable, were of no interest. As one old hunter put it, "All I know is, an old buck lying down looks like a brush heap."

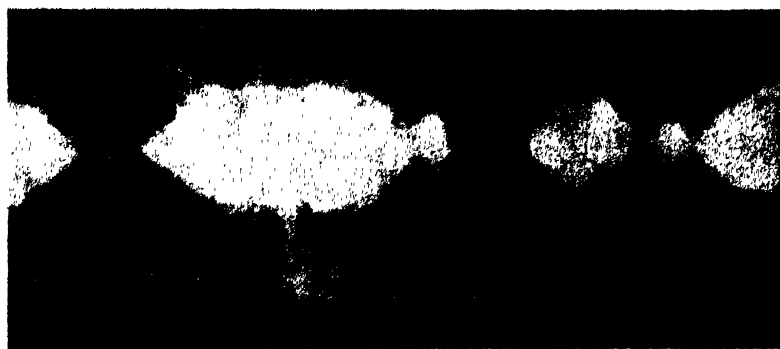
Another, a younger man and more keenly alive to the wonders of nature, was the proud owner of two deer with antlers inseparably locked. He had "stuffed" them himself—which was sufficiently evident—but was blissfully unaware that they were mule deer with whitetail horns! He thought maybe I could help him sell them to some museum back East.

The case was somewhat different with the taxidermist in Mandan fifty years ago. He always had a stock of locked deer heads mounted to fit in a corner, one sprouting, as it were, from one wall, the other from the wall at right angles to it. He did not, however, mix his species, the heads

were all of white-tailed deer—the kind most often found with antlers locked—and he explained frankly to his customers just how he did it. Taking two heads well matched in size, he would saw one in two, lock its horns with the other head, then bolt the two halves together, and mount both heads, each with its proper skin. Despite the fact that the buyers knew they were synthetically produced, he said he sold a good many of them. There are people, too, who cross the West in a Pullman car and complain that there is no “scenery.” This is understandable. To most of them “scenery” means topography with plenty of green grass. They see no beauty in aridity, badlands, and sky effects.

But lack of interest is not the sole cause of inability to see. It may be poor eyesight, or ignorance of what to look for, or how to look. Some men, though eager to do so, cannot see antelope or flying fish, and few, very few of us, ever see flying squirrels, though this is mainly because they are nocturnal in their habits. At night on tree-lined village streets we often hear their diminutive squeaks without realizing that they come from anything more important, or larger, than a half-grown mouse or wakeful bird. Nevertheless, one whose inclination tends toward such unprofitable pursuits may in the course of a lifetime not only see but feed from the hand, and handle, a dozen of these fascinating and relatively common little animals.

Training and experience also play a part in determining what we see or fail to see. I once met two men in the St. Lawrence County woods in northern New York. One was “cruising” for bird’s-eye maple; the other was his guide. Although the guide seemed to think him hopelessly deficient in more important details of woodcraft, the timber cruiser could spot curly maples among their straight-grained fellows with a certainty truly marvelous. Mind and eye were focussed for curly maple—nothing else.



Mirage. The Teton Peaks in Wyoming, looming. Early phase. Later phase. From sketches, Dec. 21, 1899.



Mirage. The Three Buttes of Snake River. The Three Buttes distorted by mirage.

One evening, coming in from the day's work, the guide was telling of having seen a big buck only a few feet away looking at him broadside. His companion who had not seen it, though it had stood in plain view, exclaimed excitedly, "I'd like to see a deer like that!" "Well, sir," replied the guide sententiously, "*you* never will."



When the West Was Wild

THERE is no denying it; the wild West is not what it used to be, and judged by cinema and rodeo standards, there may be some doubt that it ever was. At least we of the old days can now see how far it fell short of what it might have been.

But granting that the West once was wild—after a fashion of its own—of what did this wildness consist, and when did it cease to be?

Was it in limitless horizons, in many-colored badlands fading into an opalescent distance of indescribable beauty? Was it in snow-capped peaks merging with the tint of clouds, in the tender grays of miles of sage, in the mirage? In large measure, yes, and in this sense may it ever remain wild. True, the prairies of Kansas and Nebraska are now clothed with level ranks of planted trees, and the irrigated valleys of the mountain states show an unwonted vividness of green. The once waving bunch grass is close-cropped, and the dry farms have changed the tone of the uplands, but in many parts the primitive, austere beauty remains.

The thing which has largely disappeared is the mystery of the unknown, the element of danger, actual or potential, from wild beasts and wild men, from death in unexpected forms, from thirst, hunger, and cold. For men of the

adventurous type the lure lay mostly in the pitting of courage and frontier craft against these odds.

Paradoxically, although it was the white man who tamed the West, his first coming and the ensuing period of struggle did much to add to its wildness. Up to that time the natives had had their petty wars and jealousies, but on the whole it had been a region of comparative calm. From that time on it was to learn more intensive methods of warfare, and much of the picturesque savagery of the frontier period was due to the Indian's heroic resistance to the white man's advance. The taming of the West, therefore, depended largely on the taming of the Indian and forcing him to adopt our ways.

Now in the sign language a "white man" is indicated by drawing the hand, palm down, across the forehead, meaning "the one who wears a hat," the logical inference being that an Indian does not wear one. Imagine then the dismay of the idealist on discovering that not a few supposedly uncivilized Indians did wear hats. Fortunately for me I was not too suddenly disillusioned, as the first wild Indians I saw on the plains were hatless.

Hats, it is true, were worn only "for grandeur," not to protect the head, and their use was by no means universal. In some tribes they were seldom seen, and in purely native ceremonies one might say never.

Some of the Uncpapa and Blackfoot Sioux would take a perfectly good Stetson and pull it out of shape till it resembled the "vagabond hat" now worn by our ladies, or the pointed headgear of a clown. Then they would scallop its edges, tie a strip of otter skin around it—at a time when otter skins sold for ten to fifteen dollars apiece—and finish its decoration with eagle, hawk, or owl feathers. The result, of course, was always grotesque and often horrible to behold; maybe that was the intention.

The Crows, Shoshones, and Nez Perces used more

restraint. They allowed their hats to retain their original form, merely ornamenting them with eagle feathers, or wrapping the crown with gay silk handkerchiefs.

Naturally, and very properly—with the exception of those not in sympathy with “the noble red man” legend—artists, travelers, writers, photographers, all suppressed these details, so that each newcomer was left to discover them for himself, and reach the melancholy conclusion that he was born too late to see the native American in his pristine glory. But in this the newcomer was only partly right.

Even as far back as the eighteenth century the traders had begun to penetrate the Far West, and the Mandans had beads and strouding. As early as 1833 wagon trains of traders’ goods had crossed the South Pass, the Cayuse and Nez Perce had hats, and the Prince of Wied was being received by chiefs of the upper Missouri tribes wearing beaver hats of unbelievable magnificence. Nor were these people entirely to blame for this absurdity. The traders and government representatives had a way of “raising” or recognizing chiefs by thrusting upon them impossible hats and obsolete uniforms, “complete chief’s suits” as they were called. When attending councils or greeting distinguished white men, the Indians wore these in the innocent belief that they were properly dressed for the occasion. Medals conferred by the government were worn in the same way, and on visits to Washington, but seldom otherwise.

In 1675, King Philip’s War was caused, indirectly, by the finding, on the ice of a pond, of a hat belonging to Sassamon, a friend of the English, who had been murdered by Philip’s men. Very likely Philip himself owned a ten-gallon Puritan “lid,” but what historical painter would be base enough to portray him in one? Pocahontas, of

course, wore a hat, but this may have been only after she went to England.

At any rate, the white man's hat did not make the Indian a white man. If the process had been as simple as that the result would have been achieved much sooner. The advent of the hat, being coincident with the introduction of firearms, may have made him still more determined to remain an Indian. As an emblem of civilization the hat had no more significance than pipe tomahawks or than Yankee-made butcher knives, which, though not intended primarily for scalping, proved admirably suited to that purpose when ground to a chisel edge. Nor did the arrival of the first steamboat at the mouth of the Yellowstone in 1832, nor the temporary installation of a tailor and a barkeeper on Green River (now western Wyoming) in the following year tend greatly toward the immediate subjugation of the native tribes, though they did portend the ultimate supremacy of the white race. The fact is that from the time they acquired horses, which may have been one or two centuries back, the wild tribes had been changing, and while no less savage they had become infinitely more independent and dangerous, more dashing and picturesque.

Walter Shirlaw, on seeing the well-mounted, well-fed Crows, pronounced them "undoubtedly pictorial, possibly semi-picturesque." The distinction was a nice one, but I think I know what he meant. He felt that the heavy striped blankets and wide-flapped leggings obscured the figure, which was true, though in their camps there was ample opportunity to see them in various degrees of nudity from partial to complete.

The primitive Indian, though far from prudish in many ways, had definite views on modesty and decency, though he regarded the unclothed human form far differently from what we do. Standards varied somewhat

from tribe to tribe, but one feature seems to have been universal with the peoples of the northern plains and mountains, that is to say, the tribes with which I was best acquainted; the unclothed male was much more frequently seen than the unclothed female. Around the camp boys up to the age of seven or eight years often went entirely naked except for the never-absent string about the waist, while men frequently wore nothing but the breechclout, and perhaps moccasins. Women and girls, on the contrary, were always fully dressed, with the exception that Shoshone and Crow women sometimes bathed with the men (usually of their own family), both sexes completely nude.

There is this to be said, however, on the subject of nudity: races of darker skin who go habitually naked do not feel there is anything strange or immodest about it, and as a result their bearing is natural and free from self-consciousness. Then, too, their skin, toned by exposure to light and air, has none of the blanched, naked look of the unclothed white; it has more of the soft luster of newly burnished copper or bronze. As a rule the primitive Indians lacked the heavy pectoral and deltoid muscles of the classical Greek statues, which undoubtedly were idealized to a certain extent, but there was about the best of them a lithe symmetry and beauty of form, unsurpassed, I believe, by any race living or dead.

Alcohol and smallpox did much to break the independence of the Indian, but the main factor was the growing scarcity and ultimate extinction of the buffalo, for without these animals the warlike tribes could not subsist through a long campaign. The final extermination of the wild herds—in the United States—did not come till 1896, but ten years or more before that they had been too few and scattered to be depended upon.

In 1883, Sitting Bull's band traded three thousand dollars worth of buffalo robes at Standing Rock. The next

year their entire annual hunt yielded just one cow, and so far as I know the Brulés and Ogallalas did not go out at all. The winter of 1890-91 saw the last Indian battles of any importance, and it was then the range cattle, not the buffalo, which fed them, and many of these cattle were their own.

The scarcity of buffalo was reflected by the stationing of cattle detectives at the agencies. These men were in the pay of the large cattle owners, and their business was to keep a lookout for beef hides bearing other than the official "I D" brand of the Indian Department, for, naturally enough, when they could not find buffalo, the Indians were not averse to killing cattle. At Rosebud the cattle detective—in 1884—was Mose Howard; at Standing Rock it was a young Texan whose name I never knew. They had little to do other than frequent the traders' stores—Jordan's and Bordeau's at Rosebud, Martin & Williams' at Standing Rock—where no doubt their presence may have prevented the trading in of contraband hides, though probably many a one was dehaired while on the hunt, and cut into suitable pieces—sans brand, of course—for future use as moccasin leather or *parfleche*.

The killing of Sitting Bull, in December, 1890, removed perhaps the last likely cause of future trouble, that is, of serious trouble from Indians, for, though we may not know it or are loath to admit it, this forceful personality had a great and mysterious influence over his own people and other tribes as well. However, with the ending of Indian wars the West did not immediately find peace.

It is true the question of what was to be done with the great area won from the Indian had already been decided. Cattle had usurped the feeding grounds of the buffalo, and the hide hunter had finished what remained of the once innumerable herds. It was then the cowboy who furnished the picturesque element, and to a greater or lesser extent

he still does. But the great unfenced, free range bred lawlessness as well as cattle. Instead of the Indian's fighting for his own country, with what, in any other race, we should not hesitate to call patriotism, it was now white man against white man, fighting for what?—that he might have more cattle or sheep to ship to Chicago or Kansas City. The spectacle was not always edifying. It was often so much the contrary that many of the details of the stockmen's wars, feuds between cattlemen and sheepmen, murders of small settlers, summary lynchings of actual or alleged rustlers and horse thieves never got into the papers, and an outsider who tried to get authentic or official information about them found himself facing a blank wall. Nobody knew anything about it.

I was twenty when I first saw the Far West in 1884. The buffalo herds already had dwindled to almost nothing, and the Indian was at his last stand. The next twenty years were to see the passing of nearly all that had made the frontier period what it was. Though I sometimes wish I could have seen it ten years earlier, I doubt if it would have seemed very different. As it was I had the opportunity of knowing personally most of the noted men of the Northern Sioux, Gall, Rain in the Face, Sitting Bull, Charging Thunder, Charging Bear [John Grass], Kill Eagle, Low Dog, Long Dog, and the rest, and of hearing from them the Indian side of much that happened in the Big Horn campaign and earlier.

I have seen much of the West since then, and many changes. Now the bands of wild horses are being slaughtered as a pest. Wolves, coyotes, eagles, foxes, bears, prairie dogs, bobcats, and mountain lions are officially trapped and poisoned. The beautiful little swift, or kit, fox, which used to be so common, is now rarely seen. The antelope are all but gone, and the open spaces are void of interest. In my day I have known sections where you might

ride for hours with antelope almost constantly in sight. I have ridden for five miles through a continuous flock of sage hens, thousands of them on all sides as far as the eye could see, and, as for prairie-dog towns, in some localities there were miles upon miles of them. There may be places where you can see such things today, but I doubt if there are many.

Even in such sections as still retain their wildness the character of the human inhabitants also has changed. It goes without saying, of course, that not all frontiersmen were ruffians, far from it, but the time was, nevertheless, when an eruption of cowboys into town was the signal for the peace-loving citizens to seek the seclusion of their homes. The sudden appearance of a few wide hats and jingling spurs in the bank or post office would cause the ladies to retire; a courteous removal of the offending hat would generally bring them back. At the present time a cowboy in the most exaggerated get-up is no more feared than the fiercest pirate at a fancy-dress ball. And why should he be? The finer his costume the likelier he is to be the son of some rich stock owner, a famous movie star, or a young millionaire of Park Avenue and Newport who has just ridden in from the nearest dude ranch.

Nowadays every young fellow who "rides" has woolly chaps—white, piebald, orange, or cerise—whereas forty-five years ago a cowboy's chaps were of plain leather, fringed, or tied with silver conchas, and in the few cases where they were of the hairy variety they were black.

There have been changes as well in the fashion of saddles and of hats. In the old days, in the parts of the country I knew, the ten-gallon hat did not exist. The hat of that period had a wide brim, but the crown was only moderately high. Generally it had a weather-beaten look, and while it may have cost fifteen hard-earned dollars, it was treated with ostentatious contempt, and

often thrown on the floor in the corner whenever its owner washed up for a meal in a restaurant or semi-civilized home. The hat of the present era, on the contrary, is essentially a show piece suggesting the sheltered life, and many leisure hours spent on respectable hatracks. Even in the early eighties a narrow-brimmed hat, sometimes called "a Montana hat," was taking the place of the wider brim. Though it soon won favor with men of all classes, it seems to be associated in my memory, at first, with the dapper little "cow town" gambler, who was often a more dangerous mankiller than the toughest widebrim from the outland ranges.

Every old-time cowboy was a good rider and a practical roper, and some were widely known for their skill, but the old West probably never saw at any one place or time such galaxies of champion bucking-horse riders and trick ropers as are brought together by the modern promoter. The cowgirl on the rearing circus horse is beyond question an innovation.

Certainly the old West did not lack picturesque qualities, but compared with the well-rehearsed wildness we now behold it was a trifle provincial, unsophisticated, and not always so genteel. The wildness of the old days was spontaneous and genuine, however. It was not standardized. It lacked the wise supervision and restraint of censors and promoters. Consequently, now and again it overstepped the bounds of good taste.

I have in mind a small town—little more than a stage station and depot for freighters—where an outlaw's head was exhibited on a white platter on the bar of a saloon. Today it would be hard to believe that this trim little city with its lawns, flowers, library, and steepled churches had ever witnessed such scenes. He who was the proprietor of the saloon in question had become, when I last saw him, a druggist, or rather, he kept a drugstore, though I suppose he could no more fill a prescription than I can. He was also

a game warden and the reputed leading bootlegger of the community.

This head-on-a-platter wildness is a thing of the past. The wildness of the ten-gallon hat and the cerise-colored woolly chaps bears no relation to it. It is *magnifique*, no doubt, *mais ce n'est pas la guerre*.



First Impressions

Valentine—Rosebud—Lower Brulé

THE year was 1884, the first days of autumn, and I was twenty. With my brother, a year and a half older, I had come to study Indians—he to photograph; I to paint them.

From Nebraska to the Cannonball River, in what is now North Dakota, lay a region officially known as the Great Sioux Reservation, and all west of the Missouri for hundreds of miles across Dakota Territory into Wyoming and Montana, was wilderness except for the mining camps in the Black Hills, scattered cattle ranches, a few Indian agencies, and an irregular ring of forts grouped significantly around the domain of the Teton Sioux. To the south, in Nebraska, the Sioux City and Pacific Railroad reached as far as the edge of the sand hills, and here, at Valentine, the last town and the end of the rails, we left it.

It was near midnight, September 4. The one street, a broad expanse of dirt and sand, was lighted only by dull gleams which glowered from the few places, saloons mostly, which remained open. Small groups of inhabitants, come to witness the daily phenomenon of a train arriving from the East, were visible, if at all, merely as blotches of an intenser dark in an all-pervading gloom. Overhead a cold,

diffused light from an unusual number of stars, incredibly bright and near, seemed to make the earth below still blacker, and a tang almost of frost in the night air told us we had been making altitude rapidly during the sultry hours of daylight. A swaying army ambulance with four galloping mules swept in a wide circle through clouds of sand and dust, took on an officer for Fort Niobrara, and vanished into the night.

The hotel, a low, rambling structure of logs, had, like most of the buildings facing the street, an impressive false front of lumber, to give it the appearance of a framed edifice, but the partitions of its rooms were of rough, unmatched boards with such ample spaces between as offered but slight concession to privacy. Every part of the place, of course, was gritty with sand.

By the light of day Valentine was revealed for what it truly was, a typical "last town" at the end of the road, a jumping-off place for the beyond, and in the nature of things a "cow town." It did not differ materially from many I have seen since, but these are first impressions.

From time to time the soft patter of horses' hoofs announced the arrival of riders from the outlying ranges. Singly, or in groups, they would lope up to the hitching bar, dismount, and throw the bridle reins over the horse's head, and with their high heels thumping along the plank sidewalk, the jingles on their spurs chiming a tinkling accompaniment, make their way to the nearest saloon—The Gem or The Congress, as the case might be—through the open door of which came the sound of convivial voices and the sibilant drone of the gambling wheel, the operator of which sat behind it on a high stool in a corner, literally with his back to the wall, to economize space no doubt, or possibly so no man could get behind him.

Somewhat later these knights of the open range would emerge, slightly exhilarated perhaps, but carrying their liquor like cavaliers—which they were—and gentlemen—

which some of them may have been—and, swinging into the saddle with the instant swift stride of the trained cowboy, they would go bucking a few paces down the street, and then out toward the waving line of sand hills to the Southwest. Of shouting and shooting there was none, though in times of unusual hilarity there had been cases of men shooting each other more or less effectively, and when out of luck, or at the wrong end of a prolonged spree, a man might shoot himself, as happened the second night of our thirty-six-hour stay. We were assured, however, that the authorities were taking measures to discourage the use of the six-shooter within the town limits.

Valentine has since become a neat, progressive little town, but when I first saw it it had all the depressing squalor of the seedy, old-new frontier town with false-fronted buildings and sleepy inhabitants. We were glad to exchange its row of sand-blasted, sun-bleached stores, saloons, and fictitious ice-cream parlors for the unspoiled open country.

Travel to Spotted Tail (Rosebud) Agency was light, and the mail stage, which proved to be nothing more imposing than a platform wagon with an elderly driver of dry wit and evident education, answered all requirements. In this, early on the second morning, we took our departure.

A few miles out we crossed a tributary of the Niobrara, flowing between broken banks with a few small trees and willows, and here and there a towering rough-barked pine, then out on the higher plain of waving grass, land of the wide-spreading earth and sky, dry air and ceaseless breeze, where *Sblo-sblo-la* [the upland plover] and *Tee-tca-nee-tca* [the curlew] wheel and call; then after about thirty-five miles, the breaks of Rosebud, on the opposite side of which stood the agency and traders' stores.

At the foot of the hill, near the creek, were Louis' mess house and bunkhouse, formerly the home of the

missionary sisters of the Roman Catholic Church. Here we stayed while at the agency.

Both these buildings were double or triple log houses, that is to say two or three log cabins of the usual length joined end to end, and partitioned as required. The roofs were of dirt laid on poles, the chimneys a length of stove-pipe. One entered by the door into the dining room, where "Bill" officiated, his Indian wife at times assisting. Beyond was the kitchen, where the wife presided, and Bill no doubt helped. Back of that were their living quarters. A few yards away stood the bunkhouse, and not far from this was the corral.

The language in serving meals was a mixture of English and Dakota. We were asked if we preferred *Pejuta* or *Waqpe*, shortened forms of the Dakota which stood respectively for coffee and tea. "Uncle," the stage driver, who must have his joke, asserted they were both poured from the same pot. There was no spacious ice house like that of Kenneth McKenzie at Fort Union. Beef was kept in the shade of a few boards which formed a kind of springhouse, and was served fresh as long as it could with any semblance of truth be so called, after which we fell back on the Indian dried product, as hard as a board and of an insipidly sweet flavor due, I think, to the lack of salt in its preparation, or the bland smoke of willow or cottonwood fires kept under it in slow-drying weather.

The door of the bunkhouse stood hospitably open. Our bedstead of rough boards had a grass-stuffed tick and buffalo robes. Occasionally, in the heat of the day, an Indian would be found there taking his siesta.

A combination of soap and alkali dust had formed an incrustation on the tin washbasin, and we had just tidied up for dinner when a tall cowboy came in—a man of about forty, wearing mustache and imperial, and black hair hanging in wiry ringlets to his collar band. Throwing off his hat, he looked at the basin, then at us. "Where do

you wash?" he asked. We pointed to the basin. He studied it quizzically. "Did you wash in it?" he queried. "Yes," we admitted. "Then," said he, "I suppose I've got to."

A moment later, as he reached for the towel, the water dripping from the ends of his beard and hair, he informed us he had followed cattle so long he "didn't know nothing but stand in the middle of the trail and paw and bellow."

It is a strange life, but these weather-beaten men, born to the saddle, will stick to it till the first hint of old age renders them useless. Affecting to despise it, but in reality as proud as Lucifer, there is deep down in their hearts, beneath the stoical exterior, the feeling that they are homeless wanderers, and when mellowed to a certain point their thoughts turn, invariably, to home and mother. We were kept awake a good part of the night by a young fellow with a very fair voice, who entertained his hearers with endless repetitions of "The Violet I Plucked from Mother's Grave," though some of them, probably, didn't know whether their mothers were dead or alive, and most of them had never seen a violet.

There was an atmosphere of primitive hospitality at Bill's, plenty of local color, everybody friendly. I admit I enjoyed it.

After dinner we called on Major Wright (Indian agents were always called "Major") and presented our credentials.

The frame buildings of the agency were painted white, as was the low picket fence which enclosed them, though on the west, facing the low hills which commanded the flat area on which the agency was built, was a close board fence eight feet high, "to keep the sand from blowing over the place." Very likely it did serve that purpose, but it also screened from the view of any discontented Indians who might be on the hills the coming and going of agency employees, for these Brulés had been known to fire occasional shots into the agency. Outside the fence were

two or three log dwellings and three trading stores, one a low log building kept by Charles Jordan, and another, more pretentious in appearance, the frame structure of Louis Bordeau, with an imposing sign, *Lakota Mazopiye*—[Indian Store].

At a short distance behind the agency was a small brook, in the bed of which had been placed, in lieu of steppingstones, a buffalo skull and an assortment of plows and harrows, these last, no doubt, originally part of some government issue. Across the brook, on top of a bluff, stood a two-story frame house of the same white as the agency buildings, and so like them in general character it might have been, and probably was, built at the same time and by the same contractor; a bald, ugly house in bare, cheerless surroundings. Through the uncurtained windows could be seen two or three Indian women sitting in the middle of the floor. This was the house of the late Spotted Tail.

Spotted Tail had been head chief of the Brulé Sioux; at one time, in fact, the government had tried to make him chief of all the Sioux, though before this he had gained a position of influence among his own people partly through a natural talent for leadership and partly because he had usurped the power of a rival chief, Big Mouth, whom he had killed. However, it was his friendly attitude toward the government, in contrast with the hostility of Red Cloud of the Ogallalas, which raised him to the zenith of his power, and unquestionably brought about his death.

As a reward for his friendliness the government had built him this house and provided him a team of white horses and a light wagon as a gift, it was said, from President Grant. All of this aroused jealousy and distrust of Spotted Tail who was thought by some of his people to have sold himself to the enemy, nor did the resentment of the friends of Big Mouth and of Running Bear, whom he had killed before that—in a quarrel over a woman—render his

position more secure. To further complicate the situation, Spotted Tail was said to have more recently taken possession of another man's wife, and Crow Dog, an avowed political opponent, had espoused the cause of the aggrieved husband. The time was ripe for trouble, and there were threats against Spotted Tail's life.

Early one morning in August, 1881, Spotted Tail was in Jordan's trading store. Crow Dog entered. Without appearing to notice his enemy, Spotted Tail asked the clerk for the loan of a pistol, and, turning toward Crow Dog, offered him the weapon, saying, "You want to kill me. Take this. Go ahead and kill me."

It was a gesture of bravado. Crow Dog made no effort to take the proffered six-shooter; it was not the way such things were done, and, anyway, Charlie Jordan's store was not the place to take the life of Spotted Tail.

Crow Dog left the store almost immediately; Spotted Tail did not go till near dusk. Then, untying his team—the gift of the President of the United States—he got into his wagon and started for home. At the crossing of the little brook, where the plows and buffalo skull served as steppingstones, a shot rang out. Spotted Tail lay dead at the hands of Crow Dog.

Indirectly, perhaps, this was the almost inevitable outcome of an effort to win with gifts the allegiance of a chief of a warlike and not overfriendly tribe. As a matter of policy, to say nothing of justice, the affair could not be ignored. Crow Dog was tried and convicted by a jury in Deadwood, and sentenced to be hanged, but on appeal he was released, the court deciding that, according to treaty, the government had no jurisdiction in an offense committed by one Indian against another. Crow Dog was considered, by his adherents, to have been vindicated. He had no longer anything to fear except the possible retaliation of Spotted Tail's friends, and they had already been placated by gifts in the Indian manner.

It is true Crow Dog habitually wore a six-shooter on his right hip, not unwisely perhaps, as some rivalry for a lady's hand might at any time cause the old hatreds to flare up afresh. There was nothing Indian about his dress, which consisted of a soft black hat, black shirt, and dark trousers tucked into high-heeled cowboy boots which fitted his feet admirably. He had a thin beard, and his hair which hung loose to just below his ears was curly, an unusual thing in an Indian.

At our first meeting he attempted a conversation in which he mixed a few very badly pronounced English words. Wishing to impress us as one having the progress of his people at heart, he talked of schools, thinking we were schoolteachers. Finding we were not, he asked if we were *Igamun tonka*, which means "big cat," or "panther"—their nickname for an inspector, one who prowls watchfully and stealthily about.

From his extreme affability, which I thought assumed, and from his very un-Indian costume, it was easy to guess that he was trying to be a white man at that time. Eighteen years later I met him again and recognized him by his curly hair, which now he was wearing long in the Indian fashion. Since our first acquaintance he had figured rather prominently in the Ghost Dance uprising, and had become a thorough Indian again. His face was beardless; he wore blanket, leggings, and moccasins, and he did not attempt any English. Crow Dog was an opportunist, and, possibly, like a more famous leader, when the opportunity did not present itself, he made it.

In his lodge, not far from the Spotted Tail house, lay Long Pumpkin, his right thigh shattered by a ball received in a recent skirmish between rival factions, the immediate cause of which was, as usual, the stealing of a squaw, but whose squaw, or by whom stolen, I did not learn. Long Pumpkin, who was an intelligent, pleasant-faced man slightly under middle height, seemed pleased at our visit.

I believe he was in some way related to Spotted Tail, a fact which in itself would be sufficient to involve him in any recrudescence of the old feud.

This stealing of squaws, which has several times been alluded to, may need explanation. The Sioux were a patriarchal people. Theoretically, and often in practice, a girl had no voice in the choice of her husband. The conventional and respectable way of obtaining a wife was by negotiation with her father or brothers, which virtually amounted to purchase. To elope with a girl without the consent of the men of her family was to steal her. It was an affront to their authority, an insult to her family, and often placed the culprit lover in peril of his life, unless the quarrel was composed by gifts of valuable property. A very influential and powerful family might demand an indemnity which the family of the lover could not pay; then there was nothing for it but to fight. To take a wife from her husband with or without her consent, but, at any rate, without his, came under the same head.

It was somewhat like the knights of old rescuing maidens held captive against their will, except in this case it was not quite the right thing to do. Though condemned by the conservative element, especially those of the injured family, the young fellow who succeeded in stealing a girl who was really in love with him never failed to win the secret admiration of the carefree majority in the community, who always sympathize with true lovers and applaud dash and courage in affairs of the heart.

Polygamy was not uncommon, and the wife was practically the property of the husband to do with much as he saw fit, though often they were sincerely in love with each other. In a patriarchal household a woman could hardly put her husband out of his own lodge, but a husband could put aside his wife if he wished or "throw her away" publicly, which the Indians used to say was the bravest thing a man could do.

Some years ago, during the annuity issue at Poplar Agency, a man arose and announced that he would throw away his wife. He gave her an excellent character, said she was a good woman and a good worker, and asked who would take her. From the then-prevailing Sioux viewpoint there was nothing dishonorable in this, rather the contrary. The man was showing remarkable generosity in thus renouncing, without compensation, all claim to so valuable a piece of property. The other men in the group lowered their heads in thought. Some may have had one reason to hesitate, some another. At any rate, it would be unseemly to show too great eagerness to accept so rich a gift.

The woman stood at her husband's right awaiting the decision, apparently unmoved. At last a man raised his head and said he would take her. Instantly the wife reached in front of her husband and drew her knife across his abdomen. Jealousy was a man's prerogative, but women on occasion were no strangers to it. In this case the husband was in love with another woman and his wife knew it.

In one tipi, we saw hanging on a post at the foot of its owner's bed the complete regalia of the buffalo dance with its buffalo-head mask. I had hardly expected to find this here, for while such writers as Catlin and the Prince of Wied had made much of the buffalo dance of the Mandans, I could recall no mention of its existence among the Sioux. Of the more common dances there were many. Almost every night there was an Omaha, or grass dance, the drums of which could be heard in the distance like the chugging of a locomotive puffing up a steep grade. At a nearer approach one could hear the sleigh bells worn by the dancers, the voices of the men singers, the shriller notes of the women, and the thin piping of the crane-head whistles. Close at hand the tumult was deafening, and to one not accustomed to it the sight of forty or fifty of these stalwart figures—many of them six-footers stripped to the breechclout, painted from head to foot yellow, red, blue,

or green, brandishing their weapons, their crests nodding as they fairly jarred the earth with their stamping feet—was little less than awe-inspiring.

But barring the remote possibility of being killed solely for the offense of being a white man, by some individual whose heart was bad (a danger which has continued with somewhat increasing frequency till comparatively recent years, and of which I shall speak later), there was little to be feared from these people. When they were not openly on the warpath and when you did not meet them in numbers far out on the prairie they were in the main courteous and kindly.

Possibly they exaggerated or were joking—we rather thought the latter—but the agency employes professed to see in the fortnightly beef issue the only danger in their rather unexciting lives. They advised us not to go near it, especially on foot. The cattle were apt to become brave, as the Indians say, and not only gore the horses of their pursuers, but charge anyone on foot who happened to be in the neighborhood. In addition, both horses and men were sometimes hit by bullets and arrows, accidentally, it was to be assumed, though, admittedly, the confusion and excitement made it a splendid occasion for the paying off of old scores. Nevertheless, we went to the scene of action on foot and returned unscathed.

This hunt of the "spotted buffalo" had been inaugurated to feed the Indians and keep them from roaming in search of the true buffalo, which had been their main dependence for centuries and which had become exceeding scarce. It is a common belief that the government was pauperizing these people by giving them food and supplies, when as a matter of fact these gifts represented but a small portion of what was owing them for the relinquishment of their lands, it having been decided, after actual experiment, that it was cheaper to feed them than to fight them. The U.S.I.D., branded with acid on the shoddy annuity

blankets, was interpreted to mean Uncle Sam's Idle Devils, and some of the adjectives used in speaking of Indians would hardly bear printing even today.

After being branded and weighed, the cattle were issued two or three at a time from a corral located about a mile northeast of the agency. To the west were sloping hills. Northward, well out on the flat, stood a single conical butte. Circling high in air were one or two buzzards, advance scouts of the flocks which in a few hours would dot the landscape with points and dashes of black. Indians rode past us, more than half of them armed with bows and arrows in quivers and bow cases of spotted cowskin—purely utilitarian, no ornament about them, though later, at Standing Rock, I found still in use some of the old buffalo-hide quivers, often with the hair side in, fringed and embroidered with beads and porcupine quills. There were some repeating rifles and six-shooters, and not a few short, double-barreled shotguns, muzzle-loaders of course, the miscellaneous character of the armament being due in part no doubt to individual preference, but principally to the fact that these Indians had several times been disarmed by the government.

The hunters grouped themselves near the corral. Animals were allotted according to weight to a larger or smaller family, and as each steer dashed through the gate the interpreter called out in a loud voice the name of the family for which it was intended. From one to two or three Indians would then put after it, following close behind until two hundred yards or more from the corral, when they would range their horses to the right side of the steer and begin to shoot.

I say "begin to shoot," for it was amazing the number of shots so large an animal could carry off. An Indian near us took a shot at a steer running by. We could see the puff of dust from its hide and hear the ball strike, but there was no more effect apparent than if the missile had been a

pellet of soft mud. Some animals carried arrows sunk to the feathers, a penetration of twenty inches, and still kept going; others, "on the fight," lunged at this horse, then at that, till a well-directed shot sent them wavering unsteadily to the ground. Very few fell within a half mile, and on the whole I think it was rather poor shooting, although presumably these hunters were the pick of the tribe.

There was one exceptional performer, however—a tall young fellow, well-dressed in the white man's style with a wide light-colored hat. His equipment was neat and of the very best. He rode a very fast, handsome horse, and carried a Winchester carbine. Waiting till the steer had almost reached the spot where he intended to drop it, he would start his horse at a run, and when nearly side by side with the animal he would lean forward, holding his gun at arm's length in his left hand, and with the muzzle within a foot or two of his mark deliver a shot back of the ear. The effect was instantaneous. Again he repeated the performance with exactly the same result. I noticed he held his carbine sideways, the stock resting below the forearm, thus giving leverage to support the weight of the barrel.

Some years later, when camped with the Crows on the field of Reno's repulse, where the markers showed all too plainly what happened in the running fight across the flat, I could not help thinking what a few such men, trained, armed, and mounted as described, could have done to a body of cavalry in disorganized retreat, for at that time the Sioux had not had their arms and their best horses taken from them.

Where the shot was made at close range at a running animal, the arrow was about as effective as the bullet. Provided no large bones were struck, it probably had as much penetration as the firearms they were using. I do not refer to the .45-70 or rifles of that capacity, for these mounted

Indians seldom used them, but to the lighter .44-40 Winchester carbine and the Colt's "Frontier" six-shooter of the same caliber, which were their preference. These last were good, of course, in expert hands, as has already been shown, but the smooth bores, though carrying a large ball, were so loosely loaded they were not very effective. Then, too, the depth to which an arrow was driven at its first impact was not the final measure of its deadliness. Its square or barbed shoulder permitted the muscular movement of the running animal to work the arrow forward, so that eventually it often found a vital spot.

Few realize the power of the bow and arrow; most people regard them more as a toy than a deadly weapon, and there are many misconceptions regarding them and their use. First of all, the quiver is not worn on the shoulder, as in the marble statues of Diana, for except in the stony fixity of that material there is no means of keeping it there. Many persons have difficulty in believing this. To all such I can only say, "Try it." The Indian quiver is supported by a loop over the right shoulder, and hangs under the left arm of the wearer—supposing him to be right-handed—the opening facing forward. When not in use it is generally slung, nearly horizontally, across the back.

Another mistaken belief is that the zigzag grooves on the arrow shaft are to allow the blood to flow from the wound, so as to bleed the animal. For this purpose the grooves, which are very slight, would have but little effect, and without them the wound would bleed enough to enable the hunter to track a wounded beast. Beyond that, in the opinion of any wild Indian I ever knew, bleeding would serve no useful end, as the meat is preferred with all the blood it will contain. As a matter of fact these grooves are merely a magic symbol representing the lightning. They are believed to make the arrow more deadly—to give it some of the death-dealing power of the thunderbolt.

Forty years ago any middle-aged Crow or Sioux would tell you this.

Again, we have been taught that the hunting arrow has its head set parallel with the nock, that is to say, with the bowstring, so that it will pass more readily between the vertical ribs of a quadruped, while the war arrow has the blade at right angles to the bowstring because the ribs of a man are horizontal. The supposition, evidently, is that the bow is held vertically, and the arrow flies to its mark without turning on its axis. This last is highly improbable, and as to the position of the bow, my observation has taught me that most of the plains Indians held it diagonally.

Of a number of Sioux arrows I have examined, those the Indians themselves said were war arrows have the head approximately parallel with the bowstring, which is the reverse of what it should be according to the theory just quoted. A slight majority of the hunting arrows have the head at this same angle, many have it at right angles, and some at intermediate angles.

The distinguishing feature of the war arrow of the Sioux was its longer blade and its better workmanship. The true war arrow of the Uncpapa had a blade four and a half to five inches long, or one to two inches longer than the ordinary arrow, and this, they explained, gave it greater penetration. In actual practice the two types of arrow were used indiscriminately for both hunting and war.

Catlin shows arrows, presumably for war, with long barbs pointing backward, sometimes four or more barbs on the one arrow point. Perhaps we should make allowance for possible changes in fashion, or maybe these arrows were gathered from tribes with which I am not familiar, but the nearest approach to anything of the kind I ever saw among North American Indians was three arrows with barbs an inch and three-eighths long, with shafts smeared

from end to end with a particularly venomous-looking yellow chrome. These belonged to a Brulé named Owns the Dog. I believe them to be exceptional, and it was plain that the old man's fellow tribesmen were ashamed of his barbarous weapons.

The bows of the Crows and Sioux were generally of ash, the best of them backed with sinew. Farther south there was a much better bow made of Osage orange, and this too at times was sinew-backed.

Aside from the occasional goading or killing of a horse, or such accidents as I have described, the beef issue, as a spectacle, offers little that is dramatic or colorful; no stripping for the hunt, no special dress. Here an eagle feather or feather ornament tied to the scalp lock, there a pair of unusually fine moccasins or beaded leggings, but this was merely the everyday costume, nothing more. The bowmen, and most of the others, had lowered their blankets and twisted them about their waists for more freedom of movement, but a few young fellows had not taken the trouble even to do this, riding with their list-cloth blankets over their heads or shoulders and holding them in place with one hand while with the other they fired from time to time with their pistols. Their main concern, if they had any, seemed to be to conserve energy as well as ammunition.

There was no whooping, no brandishing of weapons, no curvetting steeds, no display of wild horsemanship. There was no sound but the stentorian voice of the interpreter or the muffled "thump" of gunshots in the hot, dry air of the plains, where neither timber nor hills re-echo the sound. Where the bow was used there was little to suggest the deadly work in progress. Here, there, and beyond, groups of horsemen appeared to be driving cattle at a leisurely lope, as though to new pastures. In reality they had already done the only active work required of them and were riding quietly along, sparing all further effort, keeping the animals going till the arrows worked in.

Already other groups were engaged in cutting up their beeves. An old man passed by chewing like a cat at a piece of raw liver, blood smeared in a circle round the corner of his mouth. Another carried a tongue, his finger crooked through a slit in its tip. Still others rode with fresh hides dragging at the end of their lariats. Two hours more and the plain would be given over to the buzzards, but what they would find were scant pickings, for these people wasted nothing.

To win fame among his white enemies a primitive Indian had to be "a bad Indian." With a few trifling exceptions the "good Indians" are soon forgotten, but the names of those who fought most bitterly and successfully against us are sure to live in history, biography, fable, and legend.

At the time of which I write there were men of ability at Rosebud—Turning Eagle, Hollow Horn Bear, Black Bear, Afraid of Eagle, Big Belly, Bluehaired Horse, and others of equal note. But under the leadership of Spotted Tail the Indians of this agency had for some years been friendly, or at least nominally so, and consequently the only individual among them who was known outside the reservation was the bad Indian—and there were some who even denied him this distinction—Crow Dog, the killer of Spotted Tail, friend of the government.

At Standing Rock, however, was a gathering of the most unfriendly Indians on the continent. They had kept the northwestern border in a ferment for years, and had earned everlasting fame by wiping out Custer and all his men. Therefore, as a matter of course, it was to Standing Rock I determined to go. I had already made friends at Rosebud, and some of them advised me to remain, assuring me that the Standing Rock hostiles, having but recently quitted the warpath, were poorer in costume and accessories than the Indians of Rosebud. This I found later to

be true, but I have never regretted my decision, for it gave me the chance to meet the more famous chiefs.

The safest and best way of reaching Standing Rock, though not the most direct, was to cross overland to Lower Brulé on the Missouri, and from there to take the steamboat which was to carry annuity goods for the upper agencies and supplies for Fort Yates and other army posts along the river. The road to Lower Brulé was seldom traveled, and being a mere wagon track in a country where a man might drive a wagon pretty much where he chose, it was our good fortune to find that Sam Terry, who was familiar with the region, also had reasons for wanting to take the trip. With him we engaged passage. Probably he was as glad of our company as we were of his, for though he had excellent reasons for not wishing to meet Indians so far from home, he was starting with only three cartridges to his rifle on a round trip of two hundred and twenty miles through uninhabited country, where the only human beings he would be likely to meet would be roving bands of the race he most distrusted. Whether this was to maintain a reputation for fearlessness I could not say, but we, being young and having no particular reputation to live up to, were provided with the usual complement of arms and ammunition.

We had been at Rosebud about a month. Our departure was from Jordan's store, where, from the doorway, the proprietor bade us farewell with a few friendly, if somewhat facetious, remarks. Our traveling outfit was an ordinary springless wagon drawn by two Indian ponies. Terry was a wiry frontiersman, not far from sixty, I should judge, and at some period of his life he had had his toes frozen off, which made the tips of his moccasins turn up almost at right angles. He had with him an Indian girl of perhaps fifteen years, whom we assumed to be his wife.

How long Sam Terry had lived with the Sioux nobody seemed to know; certainly as early as 1868 he was so much

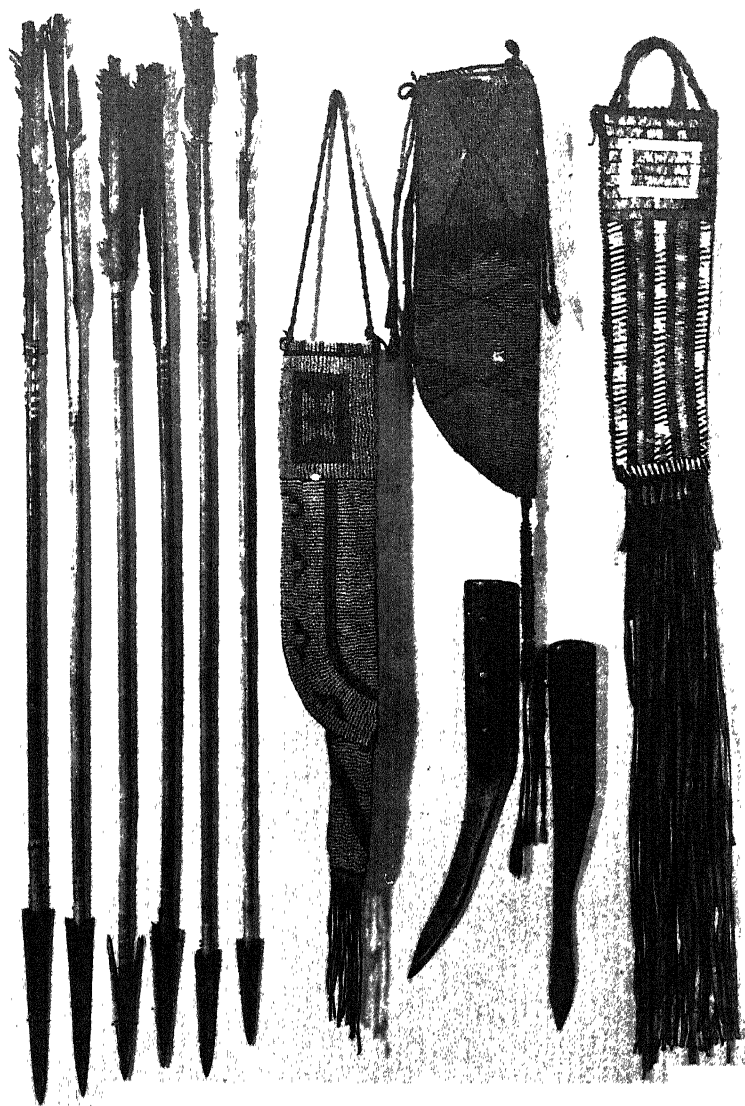
one of them that at the treaty at Fort Laramie, in that year, he was enrolled as a Sioux Indian. He had had fourteen squaws, and on one occasion he had found it necessary to kill an Indian in a quarrel over one of them. All this he told us, and more, during our three days' journey by land and a fourth on the water, and while it was evident he wished to give the impression that he was cut out for better things than to waste his life among Indians, we could not help thinking that he would not have had it otherwise.

The first night out we stopped at Soldier Creek which we crossed before making camp, following the Indian custom. This seemed to be the universal rule with the Sioux, but I cannot remember hearing any reason given for it.

Our next camp was at a small stream beyond Oak Creek which we also crossed before pitching camp. Here were twenty or thirty lodges of Sioux already settled for the night, but having come from the direction opposite to our own and following the invariable rule, they were camped the other side of the creek. This was plenty near enough, our conductor thought. In fact, he was not at all pleased at the prospect of having to pass the night so close to these neighbors, but since there was no other water for miles, we could not conveniently go on. The Spotted Tail Indians could be troublesome enough at times, but these Lower Brulés enjoyed the reputation of being "just a little bit meaner."

The men from the lodges were not long in visiting us, and they all brought their guns, which was not the custom, even with wild Indians, in making a friendly call. It was obvious from this and the sour expression of their faces that they wished us to understand their visit was not friendly.

The chief of this band was Black Dog, but it was an individual named Big Dog who did the greater part of the



Sioux arrows, knives, and knife cases. The three arrows to the left are war arrows, the three to the right, hunting arrows. The knife case to the right is embroidered with porcupine quills, the others with beads. The knives are old "Green River" sharpened only on one side. The curved blade is a skinning knife, the straight, a sticking knife.

talking and made himself most obnoxious. On our side of the fire we sat with rifles beside us; on theirs they squatted with guns across their laps. Terry was kept so busy listening to their remarks and devising diplomatic answers, he could find no time to translate for us, while our own intensive efforts of the past month to learn something of the language had furnished us barely enough nouns and adjectives to guess only roughly at the trend of the conversation. On their side it was merely a lot of insolence and indirect threats intended to intimidate us and extort what tribute they could.

Finding that we made no offer to buy them off, Big Dog delivered his ultimatum—a demand that we give him five dollars, in default of which they would take our horses and wagon. This no doubt seemed reasonable enough to him, seeing that they outnumbered us twenty to one, but Terry told him we were traveling through the Indian country by authority of the Great Father whose papers we carried, and that we would give him nothing. He answered scornfully that since the sun dance had been forbidden there was no Great Father.

Most of the men, seeing the futility of the proceedings, now began to withdraw from the group and return to their camp, but Big Dog with a dozen or so of his chief supporters continued to hang on for about two hours. Toward the end of their stay I felt inclined to laugh at them. "Don't do that," said Terry earnestly. "It only makes them worse." At last, seeing our visitors were about to depart, he handed Big Dog a large piece of dried meat with the remark that after he had eaten that he would feel a great deal better and would not be so ugly.

That night Terry and the Indian girl slept under the wagon; my brother and I, under the stars. We were not disturbed, though we slept as usual with our guns beside us in the blankets to protect them from the night air more than from any thought that we might have to use them.

Once I awoke to find some dark object bending over me. It was one of our horses dozing with his nose within a foot of my face.

Next morning the men of the Indian camp got an early start, spreading out across the plain and leaving the squaws, as they always do, to strike the tipis, pack up, and follow after them. While the lodges were coming down, and as we were about to take our own departure, a jolly, middle-aged Indian arrived from across the creek, and with a face beaming with smiles, slapped Terry on the back like a long-lost brother, to the accompaniment of a string of incoherent English oaths to express his joy at the meeting. He was a typical old "coffee cooler," but he had been shrewd enough to keep out of the ugly crowd of the night before, and to reward him for his good judgment we made him a suitable present.

That day we stopped for dinner at Dog's Ear Creek which was quite well timbered with oak and cottonwood, and at night camped at a creek which was dry except in one or two spots where the "gumbo" mud was so soft and sticky that Terry could not water his horses without danger of miring them. But we soon discovered another reason for his keeping at a respectful distance from the water hole.

Almost immediately after our arrival there came a party of mixedbloods, who as usual crossed the stream before camping. There were two men and a woman. The men, who were rather young, were dressed in cowboy style, and one of them rode down the creek in search of firewood while the woman prepared camp. He returned in a few minutes, his horse on a lope and his lariat looped about a bundle of brush which dragged behind. With a stirring whoop and spurring his mount to a burst of speed in the last few bounds, the brush leaping in erratic zigzags in his wake, he made as if to run over his companion who was resting on the ground enjoying a cigarette, his head pillowed on his saddle.

This display of reckless mirth seemed to cause Terry some uneasiness. He explained that he didn't know who these people were, and that all his life he had been involved in the feuds of his adopted relatives; it was just as well, therefore, to keep away from those he was not sure of. Besides, he said, there was always the possibility that some young devil might try to steal his squaw. "There's no use talking," said he, "if you want to keep 'em you've got to have the brothers on your side"—this in a sort of reminiscent reverie. That night he didn't care to go to the creek for water, nor did he send the squaw for it; he asked my brother to go.

Next day at noon we stopped for dinner near a thicket of the sweetest and best wild plums I ever tasted, and late in the afternoon, after fording White River, we came to Lower Brulé. Our trip had been without incident unless we except our meeting with Indians, and the only wild life we had seen were coyotes, prairie dogs, prairie grouse, and in one stretch where fire had run over the ground for a breadth of about fifteen miles hundreds of hawks standing or walking about in quest of roasted grasshoppers, mice, and gophers.

The most interesting event of our stay at Lower Brulé was the delivery and branding of the agency beef herd of twelve hundred animals driven up from the Niobrara River, in Nebraska. Here as at Rosebud the cattle were of the old Spanish longhorn type, mostly a delicate buff in color, with little accents of lighter and darker shades above and below the eye and near the muzzle. Wild as deer, their eyes had something of the soft, gentle look of that animal, but they could be decidedly dangerous when frightened or angered. Some had horns which must have spread more than five feet, and many of these were knocked off in going through the branding chute.

The cowboys who drove up this herd were the same as those who had come the year before, except for two who

had replaced a pair who were now absent. After their departure the previous year one had been found, shot dead, where the trail regains the high ground beyond the ford of White River. He was a northern man, and there had been some bitter political disputes with his companions who were Texans. The other had not come back, probably for reasons deemed good and sufficient.

Here the agent was Major Gregory. The mess house was kept by a Mrs. Eliot. A pet black-tailed buck was tethered in the shade of its north side. Being near the Missouri River, where lumber was accessible, the building was two stories high and more pretentious than that at Rosebud. Terry's Indian girl, who had never been so far above the ground, was with difficulty persuaded to go upstairs to her sleeping quarters, nor had she ever seen nor been in a boat. This we learned next day, when Terry announced that he had some business to transact at Chamberlaine, a small town off the reservation, across and five miles up the river. To get there we borrowed the agency boat, a very good one fitted with two pairs of oars.

We made the upstream trip without difficulty, rowing and towing, but as my brother and I had had considerable experience in rowing together, the return downstream, with the current to help us, was made in record time. Not until we neared the agency landing were we made aware that we had been furnishing the motive power for the first stage of a honeymoon tour, for Terry then informed us that he and the young Indian woman had been married by a minister in town.

However, the triumphal passage of the wedding barge had not gone unnoticed, for next day the tall, bearded Swede who brought over the mail asked the issue clerk, Lever, "Who were those fellows rowing the agency boat?" Lever told him. "I knew it couldn't be anyone from around here," he answered, and added, "That was the best stroke I ever saw on the Upper Missouri." Quite likely this

was true, for there were few boatmen living along its banks, and most people considered it—not without some reason—a muddy, treacherous whirlpool.

Lever was a bright young Irishman, a nephew of Charles Lever, the novelist.

It was not till eighteen years later that I again saw Sam Terry. I found him at sunset, on the bench at the door of Jordan's store at Rosebud. He did not remember me till I reminded him of our trip to Lower Brulé. Then, as I recalled the various incidents of our journey, he would answer, "Yes, that's right," or nod his head in silence. When I had finished he asked simply, "Who else was along?" "An Indian girl, your wife," I replied. Another nod and a pause, then in an unemotional tone which yet carried a shade of sadness, "That woman has been dead a good many years." I asked if he had kept any Indian things, for he used to boast of his suits of buckskin. He raised his old gray eyes to the horizon where a faint after-glow still lingered. "No," said he, "I've given up everything of that kind."

There, I thought, was the twilight of the old West epitomized.



In the Hills Where Men Get Lost

Or lose thyself in the continuous woods
Where rolls the Oregon,—

Thanatopsis, BRYANT.

LIKE village urchins making periodic pilgrimage to the old circus lot to view the fading traces of sawdust ring and trodden grass, so coyotes, wolves, foxes, after weeks and months—yes, and years—will revisit the scenes of festive events in their wolfish lives.

Not so many years ago—less than thirty—I was hunting in the mountains east of Henrys Fork, Idaho. It was the first snow, just a “skift,” and good tracking, but there was not a track to be seen. Before, on bare ground, there had been considerable sign of elk and deer, so I concluded that the Indians who had been ranging the hills had driven them off. These red men had told us they had seen no game, but their eagerness to get the brains from our deer and elk heads seemed to discredit their statement, for their principal use for brains is in tanning buckskin.

At any rate, that day there were no elk tracks. Of coyote there were about the usual number until I came to a section where these smaller wolves had woven a network of tracks, seemingly in all directions. This roused my curiosity. Selecting a track at random, I followed it faithfully,

disentangling it with no little difficulty from the maze of others, until it led me to what remained of a bull elk lying in the snow, shot and lost by some hunter, probably through the use of a rifle of too small caliber. Though most of the animal had been eaten, the head was intact except for the tips of the horns. These had been gnawed a little by some of the lesser wood folk—pine squirrels, deer mice, flying squirrels, or porcupines, but it was evident no Indian or white man had found the carcass, as the "teeth," which have a considerable market value among both Indians and whites, were still in place. These I took, but the head and horns I left, and made no special effort to mark the spot in my memory.

It is an interesting fact that coyotes in different localities have different manners and customs, but everywhere a certain appreciation of the rights of property. Though no doubt it is partly instinctive, they have learned this mainly from observing the ways of men. Some men are deterred from stealing, not by any moral sense of right and wrong but by fear of punishment. Coyotes are deterred by much the same thing, a regard for their own safety.

In the arid, open country where coyotes rarely frequent the timbered mountains and there is little trapping, it is possible to reach a sort of understanding with them as to what they may touch without incurring your displeasure, and what they may not. They seem to know when the hunter plays fair with them, and in return they respect his fairness. This is not to say I would trust all coyotes at all times, but in general they adhere to the rules here laid down.

Kill an antelope on the plain, dress it, drag it twenty feet from the entrails and waste parts, turn it with its feet in the air, or in whatever strange position your ingenuity suggests, flag it with a bandanna, or leave a cartridge shell or match on or near it as sign of ownership, and the coyotes

will not touch it for twenty-four hours, though they will eat the entrails the first night and sometimes begin their repast within half an hour of the time you leave the place. In many cases, though you may not have seen them, they have been watching your movements and those of the game, and, with the keen appraisal of expert hunters, know as soon as you do when you have made a kill, or, if in doubt, the straight flight of the magpie will guide them to it.

In antelope hunting the game, of course, is usually brought in on the saddle; only in exceptional cases is it left out overnight. One such case I always recall with amusement.

I had a borrowed horse, saddle, rope, and bridle—all except the horse much frayed and in disrepair. About sunset I killed an antelope, but the snorting horse could not be brought near it. I overcame his reluctance by blindfolding him with my coat, then packed on the game securely, the horn of the saddle through a slit in the brisket, so it could not be bucked off. When I removed the blindfold, however, the ornery beast plunged and wheeled so wildly that I feared the frazzled rope would part. In that case I saw visions of a borrowed horse madly careening down slippery, frozen slopes, falling, and perhaps breaking his fool neck, or wrecking saddle and other accoutrement, besides leaving me afoot. Worst of all, with my blood-tainted hands, I could not get near the beast to blindfold him again.

Throwing my coat at him, with the wind in my favor, I managed at last to land it on his head, where it clung just long enough for me to dash forward and button it around his neck. The antelope was thrown off, and left properly marked as to ownership already described—several feet from the entrails. My refractory steed, having won his point, was now easy to mount, and as I rode away in the gathering dusk I was restored, to good humor by a

sudden chorus of wolfish exultation from the near-by foothills, like the burst of applause at the final curtain of a farce. It amused me to think that my absurd performance had had such an appreciative audience.

Next day, as expected, the antelope lay untouched; the entrails had disappeared—a perfect illustration of the mutual understanding between these intelligent beasts and their fellow man.

In a case of this kind the human smell on and about the entrails does not frighten the coyotes; they know that these parts are set aside for them, but if an animal is killed, handled, and left without further disposition they will not touch it the first night, perhaps not for many nights. The intention of the man is not clear; they fear some trap. An animal shot from a distance and not approached by any human being, thus having no man smell, is entirely eaten, usually by next morning, even though it be a twelve-hundred-pound horse. A group of coyotes will tear a jack rabbit to shreds and gulp it in less time than it takes to tell. A horse takes longer and requires more system; they skin it precisely as the Indians used to skin a buffalo bull, ripping the hide along the back and pulling it down over the legs.

Now to return to the timbered country of Henrys Fork, where the coyotes seem bigger, of a more even, yellowish color, and different in their conduct. Here there is more trapping, and these animals wisely trust no living man. An elk, killed and dressed, is obviously some man's property, and men are known to be unfriendly. The elk, and even the entrails, will lie untouched for weeks, though the coyotes will circle hungrily around them at a distance of five or six feet. It is the living man they fear, and all his works, especially his traps and poisons; of a dead man they have no fear.

Not long after finding the dead elk, which having escaped the hunter bore no human taint and so had been

promptly eaten, I went to a hunter's ranch at Big Springs to get supplies and mail. I mentioned finding the dead elk, and the proprietor asked if I would get the head for him to hang as a trophy on his log walls. I promised to do so, but when next in the neighborhood of the elk I was unable to find it, because of the lack of landmarks, the general sameness of the ground, and because this time there was no snow to help me.

On my next visit to Big Springs, noting the evident disappointment of the ranch boss at my failure to find the promised head, I told him to be of good cheer, that I would surely get it for him the next time it snowed. "But," said he dubiously, "I don't see how that is going to help you." "I'll follow a coyote track," I said. Yet even with this assurance he still had his doubts.

I noticed that George Wilcox, a young trapper who sometimes acted as a guide, was listening quietly to the conversation. He seemed to be taking it all in, but made no comment. He did not know that within a few weeks this simple formula, "follow a coyote track," would put several thousand dollars in his pocket. Being comparatively new in those parts, George had not yet learned all the country, but he never claimed to know more than he knew, and he was always learning. Modest and unassuming, he had plenty of courage and self-reliance, had been pretty successful in his trapping the winter before, and had gained some distinction by killing a silvertip on Moose Creek. On the whole he seemed to fit well in his surroundings, but he always looked to me like one bred in the saddle astride a cow pony. One or two peculiarities of speech, I thought, indicated Texas, or thereabout, as his place of origin.

On the next snow I got the elk horns, as scheduled—by following a coyote track.

It is not strange that an inexperienced man should lose his way in wild country, but when a trained woodsman

becomes really lost it may be assumed that he has suffered some disabling accident, physical or mental collapse, or has been hampered by deep snow or bad weather. Such a man may get "turned 'round" in strange country, especially in a fog or on a cloudy day, or night may overtake him in a region so rough that he cannot travel after dark, in which case he will have to "lay out" overnight, but barring such accidents as have been mentioned, he will extricate himself, usually in twenty-four hours, by recovering his sense of direction.

Many of the Western mountain ranges rise steeply from the surrounding plains. Their flanks are timbered only for a width of a few miles, and here a downward course brings one quickly into the open where in clear weather the country lies spread out like a map. The conditions are entirely different, however, in the region lying north of Jacksons Lake, Wyoming, and west from the headwaters of the Yellowstone to Henrys Fork of Snake River, in Idaho—in other words, the region on both sides of the western boundary line of Yellowstone Park. Here the main range of the Rockies is flattened into a high, rolling, timbered plateau, running for mile upon mile, with few points from which a comprehensive view may be had. It is as though at some remote period in the past the peaks had been blown off by a titanic force, the debris tumbling and rolling, mostly toward the west, in broken waves of igneous rock.

In his section, during the last half century and more, many men have been turned around, or lost, for periods ranging from hours to weeks, and some have not come out alive. Several of my friends and acquaintances have had to lie out overnight—my partner, Tyler, for one—but I have been fortunate. A compass, if you know how to use it, is a great help. I have traveled for miles in fog or blinding snow when no other guide was possible. Under such conditions the great thing to remember is to keep

calm. Don't lose your head, and never argue with your compass, no matter how wrong it may seem to be.

At the time of which I write, William Tyler, and old-time Western hunter, was my camp companion. Seventy-three years old he was that year, and he had just killed an unusually fine elk—seven points on each horn—bringing it down with one of the most difficult and cleanest shots of his life. Of this he was pardonably proud, but he was far less so of the fact that shortly afterward he had cut his leg with the axe, for he was the most skillful axeman I ever knew. With daily applications of a salve we compounded of deer tallow and red fir gum—a most excellent salve, by the way—the wound was healing nicely, though much to his disgust it kept him in camp. However, as we generally hunted alone anyway, this did not interfere much with my movements.

In a region so accessible, elk were hard to find at that season. Few of them summered there, and these were old residents quite unlike the straggling herds which later would be driven, dejected and bewildered by the deep snows, from the safety of Yellowstone Park. These natives knew the ground and had their favorite nooks near remote springs, where guides, with their tourists, never came. Here they were truly at home, and as I see it now it was akin to sacrilege to rout them out. So much were they attached to these places that in the two successive seasons I hunted there I killed elk on exactly the same spot, though one might have searched the hills for miles around without finding any.

Such a place I had found, but each time I had been there the wind had betrayed me. Each time I had heard the beat of hoofs and the snapping of dry sticks as the band departed, but never a glimpse could I get of the animals themselves. I had to change my tactics. Studying the prevailing winds, or breezes rather—for it was in those placid, almost breathless days of autumn when the scent drifts

slowly, but more surely than in gusty weather—I devised a system of approach which worked out completely as anticipated, giving me a choice of a dozen or more animals which stood about me wondering what strange creature had appeared so mysteriously among them. Having secured and dressed the one I wanted, I started with all confidence down a long draw which I thought I knew, but which, in less than a mile, brought me to a beautiful little stream which I had never seen before and where I was certain there was no stream. It took me several minutes to convince myself that this little watercourse really belonged there and that it was I who was a stranger to the locality. In my determination to circumvent the prevailing breezes I had dropped into a new watershed.

Following down the valley for another mile or so, I came to a hill which towered slightly above its neighbors, and whose rocky, sparsely timbered top seemed to promise a fairly extended view of the surrounding region. This I climbed, and from a perch in a dry pine, a few feet above the ground, I was able to recognize the hills beyond our camp on Moose Creek. By striking a beeline and keeping the setting sun at my back, and somewhat over my left shoulder, I arrived home before it was really dark. But my course had led me down through timber and stretches of young pine standing so close together that a packed horse could not get through. A better road than that would be needed to bring out the meat.

Accordingly, next morning I started to scout out a passable trail. Striking the newly discovered stream a mile or two below where I had left it the day before, I started to follow it up. The going was none too good. The little brook, or creek, wound in abrupt zigzags between the steep, gravelly hills, which crowded so closely upon it that the most feasible trail was through the thickets of jack pine, alder, and willows, over the fallen logs, and through and across the infinite bends of the stream itself. While

making this laborious progress I noticed the tracks of two men and a dog who had preceded me up the valley, and from the freshness of the tracks I knew they could not be far ahead.

I was filled with resentment. Here, Crusoe-like, I had imagined myself monarch of all I surveyed. That other men—and with a dog—should invade this secluded place which I had found so recently and then only by losing myself, seemed little short of impudence. Also, and worse yet, the easy assurance with which they had plodded through my untrodden wilderness would indicate that they had long been familiar with it, though I was soon to discover that this was by no means the case. It was confidence born of ignorance.

Well, I had no desire to overtake them and was rather pleased on reaching the mouth of the long draw where I was to leave the creek, to find their tracks continuing on upstream. Yet, to my surprise, after about half a mile on my new course, I saw a dog quartering through the trees and coming toward me, and behind the dog, two men. None of the trio saw me.

"Hullo!" I called as they approached. The men stopped and the dog raised his head. The answer came from the taller of the men—the guide, as he turned out to be—"Hullo!" and in the same breath, "Are you lost?" "No," I laughed, "I was lost in here yesterday, and came over today to try to find myself." "Where are you camped?" "Moose Creek," said I. "What direction? How far?" I pointed—"About five miles over there." "Are you alone?" "No, I have my partner with me." "Where is he?" "In camp; he cut his leg." "Any guides?" "No."

"Where are you bound?" I asked, taking my turn at questioning. "Split Creek," said he. "Well, aren't you going the wrong way?" I asked. "You're going right back to the stream you came up this morning." That couldn't be; they hadn't come up any stream. He said this in a

positive way which nevertheless did not carry conviction. I looked at the dog's feet, at the men's footgear, and said. "You'll find your tracks there just the same." "Blankety-blank," said the guide, or words to that effect. "So the— — of a creek is running down there *now*, is it?" "Yes," said I.

I headed them toward Split Creek, and left them.

After about an hour spent in picking out a workable trail from where my elk lay to ground with which I was familiar, I was back again in the long draw. Again the crackling of twigs, again the two men and the dog coming back in the same direction as when first I met them. "Hullo!" said I pleasantly. "Where are you going now?" "Split Creek," they answered, without the least realization that they had been traveling in another circle. "You're heading the same way as before, and not two hundred yards from where we met the first time," I informed them.

The guide seemed to believe me now; it was he who did all the talking, and he talked volubly. Many were the questions I had to answer, and finally I was forced to admit I had an elk cached up above and had been looking out a way to get to it with pack horses. He told me he had been in the region two years, but didn't really know the country yet. It was a big country; you couldn't learn it in two years. I agreed with him.

He looked me over. I'm sure I was not much to look at, but evidently there was something about me that puzzled him. As he turned for the third time toward Split Creek he hesitated; he had thought of one last question, or perhaps it had been in his mind all the time, "Where do you live when you're at home?" My headquarters were in that sink of iniquity—at that period, at least—hated by all true Westerners, so I answered with the feeble evasion, "New York State." "What part?" said he, not to be denied. "New York City," I blurted. He looked at his companion

blankly. His only utterance was a monosyllable. It began with H.

A branch of the Oregon Short Line, to the west of us, had carried throughout the summer its loads of tourists to and from the Park, but the season was over; the snows were coming deeper and more often, and when it begins to snow in earnest "it's an awful snowy country." I do not refer to the occasional snows of August and September, which at that altitude sometimes reach a depth of two or three feet, then go off leaving the grasshoppers as lively as ever, and the gentians just as blue. I am speaking now of the snows of winter which come after the beautiful Indian summer, the snows which do not go off, which lie five, eight, I would not venture to say how many feet deep. It is then a matter of snowshoes and dog teams.

Now it was only late October. The last train of the year had come and gone; the railroad had signed off to some unscheduled date in the following spring, when it could be dug out. There was snow even now, but a wagon could still plow through, and it was George Wilcox who hauled us out to Ashton, forty miles down the line, from which point, barring possible interruptions from storms and drifts, the trains would run all winter.

Stopping at Big Springs on our way, we saw a party of sturdy hunters who had just arrived from one of the larger towns. They had come for elk, and, while we did not know it then the name of one of them was soon to figure prominently, and for several weeks, in the country's daily news dispatches.

To tell the story briefly, this man went out alone one day in snowy weather, and did not return. As he was thought to be thoroughly capable of taking care of himself no special anxiety was felt for him during the first twenty-four hours, but as the days went by without news from him substantial rewards were offered to anyone who would find him. For a fortnight or more the country was



George Wilcox on a load of elk meat and camp "plunder" about three weeks before he found the lost hunter.

scoured by hunters, trappers, forest rangers, and government scouts and soldiers from Yellowstone Park, but without success. Rewards were increased with no different result, for all that was humanly possible under the circumstances was already being done.

At last the search was given up as hopeless; scouts and soldiers were recalled; fresh snow fell. The forest resumed its accustomed silence. Some of its keen-witted, long-jawed residents had known all the time where the dead hunter lay—for dead he had been almost from the beginning—and now they could go and come in peace without having to dodge parties of men, mounted or on foot, pointing, beckoning, halloing, gesticulating.

The daily news dispatches stopped; the public had almost forgotten, when one morning the papers announced that the missing man had been found by a trapper-hunter named George Wilcox.

Three years later George walked into my camp on Henrys Fork. I had not seen him in the interval, and it was natural, perhaps, that our talk should drift to the subject of the lost hunter.

"How did you find him?" I asked.

George gave me a keen, knowing glance, as though the question, coming from me, had a special significance. Even before he opened his mouth I knew what his answer would be.

"I followed the coyote tracks," said he.



Muddy Water and Short Shrift

DO NOT speak of rope in the house of the hanged" is an old Spanish proverb. No doubt it would be equally tactless to question a man too closely as to how and where he killed the horse thief. Anyway, there were things on the upper Missouri about which the more men knew the less they talked; but anyone might discuss the eccentricities of that venerable waterway, the Old Muddy, and everyone did with a mixed attitude of indulgence and exasperation.

Even at the season of highest water, in spring and early summer, this river's upper reaches will float only boats of shallowest draft. In old steamboat days anything over seven feet was "no bottom," and "three feet scant," or even less, would carry through, wind and current permitting, without resort to "sparring" or "burying a dead man." Not that there is lack of depth; in places there is plenty, but in others, at its lowest stage, the stream may cut diagonally across a mile of sand bars, and divide into a dozen channels, not one of them deep enough to wet the feathers of a wading heron.

It is a river of erratic behavior. It cuts through bends, deserting old beds for new, gouging with its flood-borne ice the bark high on the cottonwoods, and two months later undercuts the banks on which they stand, to tumble

them into its eddying waters along with thousands of tons of earth.

Every mile of its upper courses is broken by rocks and rapids, with here a glimpse of towering blue mountains and there a sea of fantastic badlands. At certain points cliffs of soft white rock overhang the water, and under these swallows have built their nests of mud. Here, too, are strange landscapes delicate in coloring, unearthly in fairylike beauty. Lower down, the river widens and runs between exposed bars of sand which the wind often raises in clouds, the greater part of its whirling, sullen way lying through a valley flanked by somber hills, gullied and eroded in such an endless variety of shapes that after a few hundred miles the effect, strange to say, is one of monstrous sameness.

Let us stand on this high bank for a moment and look about us. Yonder, at the head of the bend above, is a jam of fallen timber and brush. Underneath it, scarcely noticeable, is a beaver lodge, toward which, early in the morning and evening, you may see its occupants guiding freshly cut lengths of cottonwood to which one or two twigs may still be attached, and on these the green leaves shimmer in the chill morning breeze, sawing and fluttering against the swift current. A sudden motion on our part and there will be a resounding thump, and a splash much the shape of a haystack and about as big, as the animal warns his fellows and dives to safety.

An eagle, white of head and tail, sits in the dead top of a giant tree. Toward noon, as the sun grows hotter, two deer, probably a doe and fawn, will peer cautiously from the willow thicket on the opposite shore, and having satisfied themselves that all is well, quickly cross the shelving beach to drink.

The region no longer teems with game. Elk are gone, and buffalo made their last stand on the Big Dry in 1896. With these exceptions, in spite of indiscriminate killing and

scientific efforts to exterminate so-called vermin, all the original species were represented as late as twenty-five years ago, though some by remnants only. Antelope, mountain sheep, grizzly bear, mule and white-tailed deer, wolves, coyotes, mountain lion, the smaller animals, and the birds were there, but the beautiful little swift fox, so common in the earlier years, seemed to have succumbed to the trap and the poison bait.

In the river are catfish and sturgeon, the latter rarely exceeding five feet in length, and for so large a fish showing an absurd lack of resistance when hooked, though tenacious in a passive way of what little life it has. I suppose as good a way as any other to kill it is to cut its head off. Very well. Lay the fish upon a log and proceed to do so. You will be astonished, at the first attempt, to have the axe rebound in your hands as though you had tried to chop through a large ball of virgin rubber, and will more readily credit the story of the boys of Albany on the Hudson, a hundred years ago, using a piece of sturgeon snout for the center of their bouncing balls.

Both sturgeon and catfish are good for eating, but the "gold eye," a flat, silver-sided fish about eight inches long, with large eyes set comically almost at the end of its rounded nose, is a real disappointment. In places they are in such numbers that with a grasshopper as lure one may catch them as fast as he can bait his hook and flip them out. I am sure they would rise readily to a fly, and with a light trout rod would furnish considerable sport, but as food I believe they are the boniest fish I ever encountered, and their flesh is as soft as mush. They might make good broth or chowder if strained through cheesecloth.

The river water does not look like water. It is fluent but opaque, like buff-colored paint stirred rapidly. Its turgid eddies form deep, whirling holes as large as your fist, sucking and revolving down, it would seem, to some bottomless maelstrom. These close, and a great upward

burst of water resurges as though from a subterranean torrent suddenly let loose. As this smooths to a flat, unbroken surface, an uncouth, hulking object rises slowly from the depths, rears its head as though to reconnoiter, then stealthily submerges. That—no, there are no hippopotamuses, or marine monsters in the upper Missouri—that is a great cottonwood which fell into the stream many years ago and is now waterlogged to about the specific gravity of the element which engulfed it. For the time being it is anchored here by its heavy butt; next year it may be ten miles farther down. Long since denuded of its branches by the drifting ice of many break-ups, it is pressed down and held beneath the surface by the rushing water, and at times, as you have seen, by the same force thrust upward from below. It is a characteristic phenomenon of the river—in the parlance of the steamboat days, a “sawyer”—and one of the greatest menaces to up-bound navigation, the more so because it is always ambushed in the deep channels and unvaryingly points downstream, a trap for the unwary.

There was a time when the river was the main artery of travel, and forts, agencies, and trading posts were built along its banks, when much freight and many passengers were carried by the flat-bottomed, stern-wheeled steamboats as far as Fort Benton, and from there overland to the mines of Western Montana. Now the railroads afford a better means of communication, and the Missouri, no longer useful, is dismissed with scant thanks for former services somewhat grudgingly rendered. If admittedly, it is no longer of use, I fear there are some who will not even concede that it is ornamental, though it is decidedly so in spots. The bottom lands along its upper reaches are of limited extent and seldom cultivable, nor can the water be readily utilized for irrigation as it is generally far below the level of the surrounding plains. Difficult to bridge and with but few places where a ferry can be operated

with success, the Old Muddy is now merely an obstacle to travel and a general nuisance.

Nuisance to the traveler by land, it is equally uninviting to most boatmen. Some of the old-timers, I truly believe, love it from long association, but it is affection tempered by lively distrust, and most of them are frankly afraid of it. One hears on all sides gruesome tales of mules and horses swept away and rolled hoof over ears into the seething torrent, of boats capsized and stove in, of soldiers struggling for their lives, of Indians drowning or smothered under caving banks.

In March, 1885, the chinook winds had thawed the snow and opened the tributary streams toward the west, so that the still-solid ice at Fort Yates was covered with three feet of swift, muddy water, and the river had every outward appearance of being open for the season.

"The Cowboy Dude," as we called him, had wintered at Standing Rock, and at the time I mention, having engaged in some questionable financial transaction—so the rumor ran—had appropriated a horse and started down the river during the night. At daybreak, miles below, some Indians saw a man riding on the ice down the middle of the stream. Whether his purpose was to hide his tracks will never be known, for while the Indians watched the strange proceeding both horse and rider disappeared instantly, swallowed up, no doubt, by one of those air holes which form in the ice of swift-flowing rivers.

On the fourth of March I had crossed on the ice at the fort, in a wagon, with water running to the wagon bed, but this was a crossing that had been used all winter by the mail stage, and it was believed to be safe. Just the same, it taxed one's faith a little; one had to assume that that invisible ice was still there, and still sound.

Tyler and I left Fort Benton in September, 1906, for a trip down river. Our craft was eighteen feet long, and

of our own building. She carried a load which, including ourselves, we estimated at nine hundred pounds, and thus laden she drew eighteen inches or more, so that, her depth amidships being fourteen inches, we had about six inches of freeboard.

Larpenteur tells of paying a pilot three hundred dollars to take a boatload of furs one hundred miles downstream. The furs, however, were valued at thirty thousand dollars. We, having nothing more valuable than our lives to lose, thought we could dispense with a pilot. It is true there were some among our friends who were dubious of our undertaking and tried to dissuade us from it. Some thought Tyler too old to attempt it, and at Fort Benton we were warned specifically of certain rapids we should encounter, and some of them, Drowning Man for example, sounded formidable enough. Rocky Bar was said to be about the worst, so when we got to Frost's we asked about it and were told it was just a short distance below his cabin. "They say it's pretty bad," said I. "Yes," said Frost, meditatively, "but—hell!—if you've come all this way from Fort Benton you don't have to worry about anything below here."

Without preliminary reconnoitering we ran all the rapids but one, and that one was Rocky Bar, which looked much worse from the high shores than it did from the boat. In the whole of our course we got only one or two bumps and scrapes, and shipped water but once or twice. In the steepest rapids it was usually possible to locate the rocks by the breaks of the water, but in one or two places where the river was swift, but with almost an unbroken surface, we found the whole breadth of it studded with big black rocks of most unpleasing aspect. Some showed a foot or more above water, others were only darkly visible through the murky flood, and as we were rather deeply loaded these gave us some uneasiness, though I do not remember that we grazed a single one of them. Even the

shallow-draft steamboats that made the Fort Benton run could not pass these places except in high water.

It goes without saying that in the early days the upper Missouri contributed its quota of Indian fighting, a certain encounter at the mouth of the Musselshell, in the spring of 1869, being a classic example. Battles there were, on a much bigger scale and more important officially at greater or less distance from the river, but "the Musselshell Fight" was essentially of and for the Missouri. Not a soldier was in it, but because it happened directly on the line of travel to and from the mines the story of it spread by many mouths and became one of the proudest traditions of the river.

Almost as quickly as an overnight growth of the shaggy fungus of its neighboring flats, Musselshell City had sprung up to house and entertain a floating population of tamers of the wilderness—hunters, trappers, placer miners, but mainly bullwhackers and muleskinners, arriving, awaiting their loads, or departing with wagon trains of freight from the boat landing of this log-shack metropolis for the mines farther west, it being deemed safer to transport the goods by wagon than to trust to the uncertainties of navigation through the rapids to Benton.

Probably the Sioux would not have resented the mines, which lay beyond their hunting grounds, had not the rush of whites to the far end of the Territory given aid and comfort to their enemies—the Crows and Shoshones—and worse, made it necessary to open lines of communication through their own country. They had had enough trouble closing the Bozeman Road which against their protests had been run through their choicest game lands. It had cost them two years of fierce fighting to force the government to give up this road, to abandon the forts it had built to protect it, and at last, in 1868, to sign a treaty at Laramie restoring the country to them and guaranteeing them against future encroachment, all of which, to this day, the

Sioux seldom fail to recall to visiting statesmen and Presidents.

Now, with the ink on this treaty scarcely dry, they were faced by the same problem only a few sleeps to the north of their former conflict. Naturally they did not like Musselshell City and showed their disapproval by running off the freighters' mules and horses, often hundreds of head at a time. Also, but not so often, they would shoot and scalp some transient sojourner, or even one of the "city's" more permanent residents.

On these occasions the Indians were in small parties, and after their first dash, which was always a surprise, there was seldom any real danger in sallying forth and taking a few long shots at them as they ran away, which they invariably did at the first sign of armed resistance.

One morning, after this kind of thing had been going on for over a year, Jennie Smith, a young white woman, was shot, scalped, and left for dead at the edge of town. It was bad enough when the victim was some rough freighter or sourdough prospector, but when the ladies were treated with discourtesy there was genuine indignation. A few days later two Crow women, gathering sagebrush fuel, were fired upon by the usual small group of young Sioux.

Nearly every white man within sound of the alarm rushed to meet the enemy, who, according to precedent, retreated up the valley of the Musselshell. The customary chase ensued, when on rounding a bend the pursuers were greeted by a volley of shots from another party of Sioux hidden in a gully near the riverbank. One white man was killed, and the party fell back to safer positions.

This first scattering volley would have been much more effective had it not been precipitated by the excitement of one of the Indians, who fired too soon. The enemy thus lost the advantage of a complete surprise and was now on the defensive. Another white man was hit. Rain

began to fall, gently at first, then a steady downpour. It has been said that this rain, plus superior strategy and courage on the part of the whites, won the day, but it was the transition period when Indians were not armed as well as white men; some had flintlock fusees; some had bows. The rain damped the powder in the pan and slacked the bowstrings; that is the story told by the old-timers. At any rate, it seems to have been one of those rare occasions when, having started a fight under conditions of their own choosing, the red men were caught at a disadvantage.

Many of their opponents were trappers and hide hunters, good shots, and men of experience in such matters, but their leadership has always been disputed in the councils of the old-timers. George Macdonald, in *Forest and Stream*, June 29, 1907, gives a vivid account of the fight and names several who took part in it. I have consulted a number of men of that region and that period, who were familiar with the facts, and they agree that George [Bob?] Grenell, who, in the words of one of them, was "an intelligent man—and a brave one—even though choked to death by his half-breed wife at the finish," should be regarded as chief strategist and hero of the occasion.

There were about sixty Sioux of Standing Buffalo's band, it was supposed, and they were on foot. Their rout was complete; about a dozen of their dead were found on the field.

That night there was jubilation in the "city," unrestrained to a degree unknown in more sedate communities. In the dance of victory a bearded frontiersman named Johnson, with the head of an Olympian Jove, is said to have carried an Indian's liver as a trophy, taking a bite from it now and again in bravado, though a man at Musselshell assured me that this was a gross exaggeration, that while he did carry the Indian's liver on a stick, he only pretended to nibble at it. Be that as it may, the people of that picturesque era saw nothing improbable in

the story, and the hero of it was ever after known as "Liver-Eating" Johnson.

There seems to have been less question about the exploit of one "Doctor," or "Captain," Andrews, who boiled the flesh from the heads of the dead Indians and took them back to the States for exhibition. A few days later, in early June, Joe Taylor saw the whitened skulls "fantastically arranged on the upper deck" of the down-river boat which was taking the doctor back to civilization. The incident reminds one of Captain Church, two hundred years earlier, giving the head and one of the hands of King Philip to the friendly Indian who shot him, "to show to such gentlemen as would bestow gratuities upon him; and accordingly he got many a penny by it."

When Carroll was established as a rival steamboat landing the glory of Musselshell departed. The city had never attained to years of discretion anyway, and its end was as sudden, and more complete than its growth. The logs of the abandoned houses were taken down and sawed into cordwood for the steamboats by two men whose charred remains were later found among the ashes of their own woodpiles. Some Sioux Indians under Low Dog were believed responsible for the holocaust, but I cannot verify this. Low Dog was not communicative on such subjects.

Probably few survivors of the Musselshell are now living. However, in 1907 (I have it on the authority of Vic Smith, scout, buffalo hunter, and Indian slayer), Jennie Smith, who had since become Mrs. Jim Tucker, the same (as Vic had it) who suffered "the rape of the lock," was living on her ranch thirty-five miles from Anaconda, Montana, and about five miles from where Vic was then stationed as warden of the Big Hole forest reserve.

Several years before this Vic had married the sister of the educated Paiute girl, Sarah Winnemucca, author and lecturer, as well as scout and interpreter for General O. O. Howard in his campaign against the Bannacks under

Buffalo Horn. Smith at one time was a partner with Dick Rock in a ranch at Henrys Lake, at the head of North Fork [Henrys Fork] of Snake River, Idaho. Rock had been a co-worker with Smith in the hide-hunting days, but now they were trying to preserve, under fence, a few specimens of the great animals they had but a few years before so ruthlessly destroyed. Rock was killed by one of these supposedly tame buffalo bulls.

In the earlier "eighties" the dashing Vic Smith had acted as guide to the Marquis and Marquise de Mores on their hunting trips from their ranch on the Little Missouri, near which at Medora—a station on the Northern Pacific, said to have been named for his wife—the Marquis had set up, in a frame building rather pretentious for that day, a beef-packing establishment with the slogan "From Ranch to Table."

Near here, also, a bravo of the region had shown his contempt for newcomers in general and French noblemen in particular, by shooting through the Marquis' tent, in doing which he showed poor judgment, for de Mores shot him dead. After a trial at Mandan the Frenchman was acquitted and borne in triumph from the courtroom, patent-leather boots and all, on the shoulders of an admiring crowd.

Unfortunately more than one peaceable citizen has been transformed into a confirmed man-killer through a similar experience. Something of the sort seems to have happened in the case of de Mores. The "Ranch to Table" project having failed of its promise of immediate success, he returned to France, where, at the time of the Dreyfus affair and the consequent anti-Semitic excitement, he was reported to have killed in duel a Captain Bernard, and later, I believe, another Jewish officer of the French army.

Finally this nobleman went on a secret political mission to the North African desert. His death there, through the treachery of his native escort, was thoroughly in character.

After his Arabs had wounded him he took a position in the shade of a solitary tree, where, with his rifle, he held them at a distance for one or two days, until exhausted by weakness and lack of sleep, he was induced by false promises to surrender. That was the end—an ironic twist of fate that he should pay the final forfeit to these sons of Shem who in all likelihood never heard of Dreyfus.

De Mores was not the only nobleman who had known the upper Missouri; the Prince of Wied had preceded him by fifty years. Nor were Indian fighting and quarrels between badmen the only cause of violent death. As stock increased on the open range there was the ever present temptation to tamper with other men's brands, to "beef," to run off cattle or horses.

The occasional feuds between reputable stockowners, especially of cattlemen versus sheepmen, were another matter. A few sheep, dead or maimed, maybe a dead horse, more rarely a hastily dug grave beside the trail, were the usual aftermath; but such contests were regarded as the natural result of honest difference over a division of the range. As to the minor delinquencies characteristic of these unlimited, unfenced pastures, almost any outfit, no matter how self-righteous, might be suspected or charged with them by someone, jokingly or in dead earnest, and these real or supposed misdeeds were often minimized or condoned. Then, too, there were subtle distinctions. An offense which in one section at a given period might call for the severest punishment, would at another time and place be treated as a joke and the guilty one greeted with laughter.

Not so the activities of the horse thief; horse stealing, even where horses were of little value, was the crime unpardonable. Where courts and jails were far away or non-existent, or where their efficacy was doubted, death by the bullet or lynchers' rope was the common penalty, provided, of course, that the lynchers were strong enough to

resort to such measures without endangering their own lives, for even the horse thief had his friends.

It was not very unusual for these gentlemen to hold minor offices of trust; I recall one notorious horse thief who was United States mail carrier. Some had such influential connections that no ordinary individual dared bring charges or appear as witness against them.

Naturally, a cleft in the earth's surface wild enough to shelter bighorn and grizzly, timbered bottoms for cover, with a river on which a boat could slip downstream unobserved, was an almost perfect lurking place for doubtful characters, outlaws, rustlers, and horse thieves. Such was the valley of the upper Missouri.

The horse thief generally made his appearance—if he was not one of the old residents—in the guise of an honest settler looking for land, as a small stock owner, a trapper, wolfer, or "woodhawk" (one who cut and sold wood to the steamboats), and he might take up his quarters in some abandoned cabin or build one of his own.

His neighbor, the squatter or poor rancher, sooner or later and often in spite of himself, would become aware of suspicious doings, the passing of horses and cattle in the night or the mysterious coming and going of the newcomer and his unknown friends. Often with the psychology typical of the crook, believing all rich men successful rascals and all poor men thieves at heart, the horse thief, or more likely his less astute satellites, would try to enlist the small rancher's help in caching stolen stock or getting it across the river. In such case the honest man found himself the unhappy possessor of knowledge which might cost him his life. If his innocence was in doubt, a party of lynchers might hang him, or the thieves, fearing exposure, put him where he could tell no tales. In many instances the best he could expect would be that "they" (and he was never quite sure who) would try, by intimidation and underhand persecution, to "put the run on him," and drive

him from the country. Under such conditions men grew to fear their own shadows.

Primitive peoples are continually at war. Enlightened nations require, between wars, an interval of somewhat over twenty years to recuperate and forget. About the same length of time seems needed to develop a fresh crop of road agents and horse thieves.

The Missouri, as it sweeps through the breadth of Montana, saw first the activities of the Vigilantes on its tributary streams in the eighteen-sixties, then the great roundup of horse thieves and rustlers farther down the river in the eighties, and again, in 1906, a man hunt, the full extent and details of which I have never succeeded in finding out.

The Vigilantes of Bannack and Alder Gulch had a historian—Dimsdale—and there have been others since. The names of the executioners and of the hanged, with the facetious or defiant last words of the latter from the improvised scaffold, have been duly recorded. Even the *bon mots* of X. Biedler and other spectators and bystanders have been immortalized in print, but what of the later lynchings, or let us say extralegal executions farther down the Missouri—must we infer the details in these cases would be of less interest? Writers who have touched on the latter subject at all, and they have been very few, have done so with the utmost discretion. Yet these later killings, in point of numbers at least, if not in general interest, exceed those of the Vigilante period.

The difference probably is this. In the early sixties the Territory had not been organized. There were neither courts nor judges in the proper sense of the word, and the honest men of the region were forced to band together for the protection of themselves and the community. Theirs was the safety of respectability and numbers. They held their secret courts with some show of formality, and judge and jury carried out their own sentence.

The next notable period of wholesale killings came in

July, 1884, when the machinery of the law was supposedly functioning in an orderly manner. The actual lynching was not done by parties of leading citizens, but by men hired to do it. Some of these may have had private grievances to settle, for a few were stockowners in a small way, but others, not vastly better than the men they killed, were actuated largely by the wages they received, or by loyalty to their employers or their "outfit." As the lawless characters (I mean those who were thought to deserve lynching, and their friends) were not totally exterminated, the lynchers lived in fear of their lives after the raid, and some of them scattered to parts unknown.

Obviously such work had to be done swiftly, once it was begun, to prevent the prospective victims from receiving warning, and either escaping or gathering for their own defense. There was little time to investigate evidence. Occasional mistakes were unavoidable, and then some obscure squatter or woodyard man paid the unmerited penalty.

According to various estimates the victims of this roundup numbered between thirty and sixty, but the exact figure will never be known. The enterprise was commonly believed to have been inaugurated and financed by a group of stockowners—silent partners, as it were—one of whom had been an influential citizen of Montana since earliest Territorial days. To him I applied for information, little thinking I would get it, and I was not disappointed. His silence was complete and eloquent, though curiously enough my unsuccessful effort brought about a correspondence between him and a friend of mine through whom I got a few interesting facts, but nothing to disturb the peace of mind of any of the survivors.

This influential citizen of Montana was no other than Granville Stuart, who probably ignored my request for information for the very good reason—among others, perhaps—that he was then writing his own memoirs.



Seven Blackfoot. The white castles of Maximilian. Engraving from sketch by Charles Bodmer, drawn from nature, 1833.

However that may be, at the time this account was written, and in fact until the appearance of his book* few had the temerity to mention his name in this connection.

One may search the book in vain for the names of the actual executioners (some of whom may still be living), though he implicates Theodore Roosevelt and the Marquis de Mores (both of whom are dead) in the inception of the plan, and even tells us that at one time when he, Stuart, seemed to be hesitating, de Mores accused him of "backing water."

Roosevelt later appeared mildly to disapprove of the manner in which this "rustlers' war" had been conducted, for in the *Century Magazine* for February, 1888, he says nearly sixty men were shot or hanged—"not, however, with the best judgment in all cases."

This was inevitable under the circumstances. After all, that old story of the days of forty-nine was not so farfetched; the committee of citizens called on the widow of the supposed horse thief with the apology, "Lady, the joke's on us; we killed the wrong man."

The acting leader of this band of hangmen is believed to have been William Cantrell, who was known to some of his old associates as "Flopping Bill." He had been on the upper river fifteen years or more, but after this episode he seems to have disappeared from his former haunts, and there was some speculation as to what had become of him. His exploit had made him enemies, and it was thought some of these might have done away with him, but I can say on the best authority possible—Granville Stuart himself—that Flopping Bill was accidentally killed by a train in the freight yards in Kansas City about 1902.

This information came to me in a letter from a man who knew Cantrell well in the old woodyard days. He says: "Bill got married and in a visit to his boyhood home

* Granville Stuart, *Forty Years on the Frontier*, Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1925.

in Arkansas concluded to move back there. He had some nice mares and horses he wanted to ship. . . . In the yards at Kansas City, in unloading them for transfer, he was run into by a train. . . . Stuart defends Bill as an 'honest and upright man.' While with us in the woods—1869-1872—, though peculiar in some ways, he (Bill) was not considered a bad sort of fellow."

Stuart, with others, was later instrumental in having laws passed to protect the stockowners. Speaking of the enforcement of these laws, he says: "You will note that the livestock interests paid all the expense connected with putting a stop to stealing stock off the open range; but it did stop it." No doubt the evil was checked, but even twenty years later it could hardly be said to have been stopped.

Still, when Tyler and I embarked at Fort Benton in 1906, though we knew that stock stealing was by no means a thing of the past, we hardly expected to run into a lynching bee, and it was not till we had passed the Musselshell, Squaw Creek, and Seven Blackfoot that we began to detect signs which should have warned us that we were in a land of mutual distrust, nor did we realize until still later the full meaning of all we saw.

On the entire run of five hundred miles by the river's bends we met and talked with very few people, and none of these enlightened us on current local events except one thoughtless boy who talked too freely for his own good. The fact is we ran for days through a region where a man hunt was in progress, unknown to us, and men were afraid of each other and of us. We in our ignorance feared no man, and it is quite possible that this evident lack of suspicion on our part saved us from embarrassing situations. Certainly at one time we were pretty closely watched.

One afternoon, a few miles below Seven Blackfoot, we were returning to camp from an exploratory hunt in the hills. Passing through an open space interspersed with

clumps of wild rose and bullberry, we saw three hundred yards ahead, a man who hid behind a rock when he caught sight of us. After a time the stranger seemed to conclude that our intentions were not hostile, and he stepped forth. Evidently he was glad to meet someone who was not involved in the local animosities, and soon told us enough of his story to explain his uneasiness at seeing us.

He had been a soldier at Fort Assiniboin, and on receiving his discharge had decided to settle in the country. He built a log house with temporary sheds for his implements, fenced a field, broke the sod, and planted oats. After much hard work he thought he was beginning to see the end of his difficulties, when gradually he became aware of some unfriendly influence working against him. If he left his place for a few days, as he was forced to do from time to time, he would find on his return that "they" had thrown down his fence and let in horses and other stock. His standing grain would be trampled and ruined, his cabin door would be open, his tools scattered, missing, or broken. "They" didn't want him there.

A little farther down river—a matter of miles; I don't remember how far—stood a corral near the edge of the high bank. This was one of the few ranches located so near the river, and I decided to go up and see if I could buy some tobacco.

It was one of those warm Indian summer days; somebody had been housecleaning. The bunkhouse was airing; the corral fence was draped with quilts and blankets, and the door of the neat log dwelling stood wide open.

I had seen few human beings for two months and had become careless of my appearance. There was not a man in sight, and as I appeared rather suddenly before the door the two women and several children inside the house became instantly silent and motionless. The women of the ranches are often afraid of Indians, but of white men never; yet unmistakably these women were afraid. The

larger woman showed it least; her rather comely, though masterful features remained calm, but alert, and it was she who answered my "Good morning."

I got my tobacco, and on my return to the boat I told Tyler that the women at the ranch seemed afraid of me, but we laughingly agreed that in view of my rough looks this was not to be wondered at.

Not very far beyond this, as we passed the mouth of a small creek flowing sluggishly into the river on the south side, we noticed that the muddy shore was tracked up in all directions by men in boots and shoes of various kinds and sizes. We were completely at a loss to account for such a gathering in so wild a place. Could it have been a roundup?

We learned later that this was Hell Creek, whose badlands rank as the roughest, if not the most extensive in Montana, though at its mouth there is little to indicate it, and that there had in fact been a roundup, but not of the usual sort.

After a night camp below here, and another short run, we came to a section of the river known as Grigsby's Bottom. I do not know who Grigsby was (if indeed that was his name), but probably he was some woodhawk formerly located here, or possibly an early steamboat captain. We pitched our tent near the lower end of the timbered bottom at a point where a path led down to the water. The weather had turned cold, and the mush ice was beginning to run in the river, a sure sign of approaching winter.

After dark a youngish man, riding a good horse, came down the trail to the water's edge. Apparently he had not expected to find strangers there. He told us he had intended to swim his horse across the river, that there was usually a boat tied to the bank at this point, but someone must have taken it to the other side and left it. Anyway, he concluded, it was too cold to put a horse in the water

so late in the day, so he unsaddled, took off his chaps, and tied the animal in the brush near our tent, saying that if I would row him to the other shore, he would spend the night there and come back next day. He returned so early next morning that we did not see who brought him, but we saw him saddle up and ride away in the direction from which he had first come.

That day was so cold and windy we decided to stay in camp and see if we could get a deer; but our hunt through the timbered bottom revealed no recent sign of game. However, we did find a curious dugout shelter so hidden in the brush that we would have passed it unnoticed if we had not almost stepped in the opening, which was just large enough for a man to crawl into.

On returning to camp I took a notion to test my rifle sights, thinking they might have been knocked out of line in the rough going by boat. It was just a notion, for the last time I had tried them on a deer they had worked all right, and a small blaze on a tree, a bull's eye blackened with a coal from the fire and three or four shots, now showed me there was nothing wrong with them. I had about come to this conclusion when I chanced to look toward the river. There I saw a face peering over the bank. It was the face of a man who was standing up in a skiff, and who seemed intensely interested in what I was doing. I spoke to him and explained.

He studied me a moment with an expression which seemed to me half incredulous, half resentful. "I heard you shooting," he said. "That's a signal around here when somebody wants to cross the river." Of course I expressed regret that I had put him to unnecessary trouble, and after a few questions as to whence we came and whither we were bound, and some timely observations about the mush ice being an indication that the river would soon freeze over, he pushed out into the stream and departed.

I have since thought that these remarks on the immi-

nence of the freeze-up might have been an invitation to be on our way, an effort to speed the guests who for the moment showed no signs of departing, for I now believe our presence there was inconvenient for someone. But I think there was one young fellow who thoroughly enjoyed his visit to our camp.

He came on foot that afternoon. He, too, was interested in our travels and the reason for them. His name, he told us, was Train—or something like that—and he lived with his brother-in-law—Andy Martin, let us call him—at a ranch about a mile and a half from where we were. They had come the year before from a point on the Missouri, in Dakota. Having some knowledge of the people in that neighborhood, I asked him if he knew X. “Yes,” said he, “X had a squaw; she froze to death going out to his trapping camp.”

“Did you know Y?”

“Yes, he was a mean old son of a gun. It was Y’s ghost that stole X’s rifle out of his wagon.” (This was said in all seriousness.)

“I wonder if we could get a deer around here.” I already knew we couldn’t. “We’re out of fresh meat, and would like to give the salt pork a rest.” I said it rather to keep up the conversation which promised to become interesting, for we had only just finished our last deer, and we had dried venison in the pack and plenty of other supplies.

“I don’t believe there’s been a deer on the point for a month,” said Train, “but,” he suggested cheerily, “why don’t you beef?”

“Beef!” said I. “What’s that?”

“Why, kill a steer,” he replied in honest surprise at my ignorance.

“But,” we protested in a shocked tone, “we don’t own any cattle here. We couldn’t do *that*!”

“That’s nothing,” he assured us. “We always killed a

steer when we wanted it last summer. All the way out from Dakota we were never out of fresh meat."

"Do you and your brother-in-law own any cattle?" I asked.

"No, only horses," was the significant answer. It seemed to be a case of generosity with other men's property.

Train, now on the best of terms with us, became even more talkative. For one thing I think my fringed buckskin coat had fascinated him. It seemed to give him the impression that we were desperate though unsophisticated characters from a more remote and wilder West than he had ever dreamed. Clearly we needed his counsel and advice regarding conditions and customs in the region through which we were passing. He proceeded to enlighten us.

"They," he told us, wanted him to help them get a bunch of cattle across the river, but he wouldn't do it.

"What was the trouble. Were they stolen?"

"Yes."

Zed and Ampersand had been hiding out in the badlands. Zed went to Nardell's—yes, that was the ranch where I got the tobacco, the ranch right close to the riverbank. Zed wanted grub. Nardell wouldn't let him have it. He held up Nardell and took what he wanted, and when he was going away Nardell shot him.

There had been a meeting of ranchers to get at the rights of it. Everybody was there (it would not have looked well to stay away), and as usual on grave occasions, apart from the one or two exceptional individuals who always set the pitch of popular opinion, everyone was silent and inscrutable. The facts were reviewed; there was a period of silence broken by Train.

"Well," said he, "what'll Nardell get for killing Zed?"

"Get?" exclaimed one of the leaders. "He'll get a vote of thanks from the whole community." The glint of a smile gleamed through a few of the masklike faces. That

seemed to be the answer, and there were some in the crowd who felt uneasy.

"They killed Ampersand in the badlands on Hell Creek," continued Train, "hunted him with glasses and rifles, like they would a bear."

"So that's why the shore at Hell Creek is all tracked up?" said I.

"Yes," said Train.

As he rose to go he said, "Tell X that Train and Andy Martin are at Grigsby's Bottom."

After he was out of hearing I remarked to Tyler, "If that boy had any brains he'd make a first-class rustler."

"Well," answered Tyler, "he hasn't, and he has no principles. He's the kind that will be used by older and smarter men as a tool, and when they get through with him they'll kill him."

Tyler had crossed the plains in '57; he knew his West. Cases were not hard to cite. There was the body of the stranger on Squaw Creek [Idaho, not Montana], the skeleton on Dead Man's Bar, and there were the young fellows who had come from nobody knew where, who, after being for a time on the friendliest footing with tough customers, had left the country—or so it was said—but when, how, or for what destination no one seemed to know, and truth to tell few cared.

Continuing our course downstream, we one day saw two men on shore, and, wishing to know where we were, we called out to them and started to row toward them, whereupon they stepped quickly into the willow thicket and out of sight. A few minutes later, having passed on our way, we could see their faces peering stealthily at us through the brush. Decidedly these people showed no keen desire to meet their fellow men! There were other incidents, trivial in themselves, but all pointing to the same distrust of strangers.

One sultry day in November—a weather-breeder,

Tyler called it, and he proved to be right—we saw four or five ponies drinking at the river, and near them some stranded drift logs, one of which looked suspiciously like an Indian lying motionless. Tyler did not think so. "Why should he do that?" he asked. "Probably to see if he can fool two white men," I answered, but really I was not at all sure it was an Indian.

We had passed nearly out of sight and hearing when a soft, low whoop floated across the water. It seemed more an Indian's signal to an Indian than to a white man. Farther up, I had met a Yanktonais with whom I had exchanged a few words of his own language, only to find a moment later that he spoke English as well as I did, so probably the rumor had preceded us that a strange white man who spoke Sioux—much or little, they did not know—was coming down the river in a boat. At any rate, I satisfied the curiosity of this loglike whooper by asking him in Dakota speech how far it was to Poplar Agency. He answered that it was seven miles, the Sioux having already invented a word for "mile." We had decided to end our trip at Poplar, but as it was late in the afternoon we concluded it would be as well to camp for the night and go on to the agency next morning.

Incredible as it would have seemed to us that muggy afternoon, this decision meant that we were not to reach Poplar by boat at all, but would be blocked by a river frozen from bank to bank. As a matter of fact, we had to finish our journey by wagon. That night the weather turned cold. Next day the river was running thick with ice. Three days later it had closed entirely.

In due course I got a letter from X, in which he said of Train, our young acquaintance of Grigsby's Bottom: "He shot and killed his brother-in-law [Andy Martin] near the same place where you saw him. His brother-in-law was a tough one—horse thief and lawbreaker in general—and his death under such circumstances was to be

expected." For some reason Tyler's prophecy had worked backwards.

In New York I went to the American Museum of Natural History to report a dinosaur Tyler had found in the Seven Blackfoot badlands. The man I saw there was Barnum Brown, than whom, probably, none is better qualified to speak from personal experience of the fossil beds of North and South America and Asia. This was before the days of hunting fossil beds by airplane, and our conversation speedily revealed two things—the impossibility of a single individual knowing all the details of so inaccessible a region, and secondly the fidelity of the drawings of Karl Bodmer, made over a hundred years ago under inconceivable difficulties, (Bodmer, it will be recalled, illustrated the travels of Maximilian, Prince of Wied)—yes, and one other thing, that facts unknown to our generation may sometimes be dug out of the almost forgotten works of dead authors. In other words, "There is nothing new under the sun," or as an alleged Japanese proverb has it, "To find the new search the old."

In explaining the location of the dinosaur remains I mentioned the chalky white stratum, so conspicuous from the river, running through these hills. Brown had never heard of it. He knew of such an exposure hundreds of miles upstream, at which point it is near water level, but though he had explored Hell Creek and the upper part of Seven Blackfoot, and was generally familiar with the region and its few inhabitants, he had never happened to be at a point from which this stratum was visible. Consequently he was surprised to hear of it.

We got out the atlas of Bodmer engravings in the museum library. There, in the picture of The White Castles (now Seven Blackfoot), was the chalky stratum. Here also were many other drawings of geological formations, and among them one of the Stone Walls. "Why!" said the doctor, "Here he's got trap rock, It that right?" It was

right; there is trap rock at that point on both sides of the river.

Somewhat to my surprise, the doctor showed only a mild interest in the dinosaur, which he guessed to be of the relatively common "duck-billed" type; evidently he was far more keenly interested in the recent happenings at the Nardell ranch. "You don't mean to say Nardell killed a horse thief!" said he. "If you had told me Mrs. Nardell killed him, I wouldn't have been so much surprised, but Nardell—why, Nardell is one of the mildest-mannered men I ever knew!" Moral: Don't push a mild-mannered man too far.

Several years later, after several unsuccessful attempts to gain more information about this man hunt of 1906, I had the happy inspiration to write for official data to the Sheriff of Dawson County, at Glendive, Montana. After a little more than a year and a half my letter was returned to me with the following unsigned marginal notes, for which I take this opportunity to thank my unknown correspondent. I could wish them to be a little less cryptic, but here they are:

Bob Grenell
(Patty Doyle)
Had 2 squaws
11 yrs. (18.90)

Boy by first
squaw killed Doyle
1st full B.
2nd ½ Blood

(Mike Welch) killed over
hides

Bill Brake
Tom Buckles

Bob
had
a
saloon

Denny Hennessy

Indian horse thieves were great travelers, and what a roaming ground was the boundless West! What a place to prowl; where from any high plateau a man with good eyesight could pick from the crystal-clear distance unfailing landmarks, rivers, canyons, buttes, or mountain peaks, forty, fifty, a hundred miles away—and more! A year or two of such prodigious wayfaring would teach the topography of a continent.

It is true there were drawbacks—the heat of summer, winter blizzards, hail, lightning, and flood. There was the remote danger of stumbling on a rattlesnake or a sleeping grizzly, a buffalo bull might become inquisitive, but with the instinctive resourcefulness of the man who lives close to nature and the accumulated wisdom of generations of savage ancestors, the Indian feared none of these. Such animals or reptiles might turn on him momentarily in fear, anger, or surprise, but only “the fiercest beast of prey,” his fellow man, would track him down relentlessly. Little less could he expect, knowing that beyond the limits of his home camp any man would likely be an enemy.

The horse thief moved stealthily, scanning the country in front and on both sides, never forgetting to keep a sharp lookout behind him. He watched ceaselessly for signs of the enemy, as far as possible concealing his own traces, and he avoided spreading panic among the buffalo or other animals of the plain. The scouts of the enemy, on the hilltops far away, would not fail to ascribe a commotion of this sort to the presence of the arch foe, for animals do not stampede from other species of their kind. Two or three wolves could chase a buffalo calf to the very side of its mother who would toss her horns as a signal for them to keep their distance, but there would be no stampede. But let a wild animal, an elk, for instance, catch a whiff of the human smell and it will jump and cringe as if hit by a club, though it may not start on a long run till it has felt the breeze to determine the direction of the danger,

The horse thief might start out alone, but more often the party would consist of a dozen or more. The enterprise might take days or months, or sometimes a year. Any season could be selected, even winter, in spite of its intense cold and the fact that the invaders might be tracked by their own trail in the snow. These disadvantages were offset by the ability of the thieves to trace the movements of their intended victims, and if the theft could be timed just before or during a storm, there was every chance that the falling snow would obliterate the raiders' tracks.

At this season the camps were hidden deep in the shelter of timber or brush, the people kept pretty close to their fires, and in the severest weather often left the horse herds unguarded in some sheltered spot with a supply of cottonwood bark for fodder. The thieves with their booty were consequently well on their way home before their depredations were discovered. In most cases under such weather conditions, a pursuit, if undertaken at all, would be purely perfunctory, without any great expectation of success, especially where the losers had plenty of horses and were not reduced to desperation by their loss. Revenge would be postponed until their despoilers could be taken off guard.

Certainly if some of the tribes had not been so apathetic, horse stealing would have been a more risky pastime, yet even under the most favorable conditions it was never quite free from danger. The adventurer entering a hostile camp, prowling in search of choice riding stock, always took his life in his hands, but, even in the most perilous situations, there were elements which contributed to his safety, provided he had courage and presence of mind.

A hooded capote or blanket coat generally made of a white blanket, was the outer garment favored for such a journey, especially in winter, as it was inconspicuous on the snow. War parties of this kind ordinarily left home on foot under cover of night, and as they might have to travel far and long they were supplied with extra moc-

casins, coils of lariat rope, arms and ammunition, and some light, concentrated food, usually dried meat.

The leader, or partisan, carried a pipe as symbol of his office. This might be a simple pipe of the form in common use, but among the Sioux the true war pipe was a straight cylinder of catlinite in direct line with the wooden stem. They contended that the fire in such a pipe, being pointed toward the ground, was less apt to be seen by lurking enemies, which was true of course, though I suspected this reason to be mere rationalizing, as the smell of the smoke could be detected farther than the glow of the pipe. This form of pipe was archaic, and very likely was preferred for this reason. They clung to archaic forms in ritual observance, and the use of the pipe in this connection was largely ceremonial.

The old hostility between Sioux and Crows died slowly. Up to 1882-83, and probably later, the Sioux were making raids on the Crow horse herds, and no doubt the Crows were reciprocating. In 1888, a Sioux war party led by a young partisan named Frosted was headed off by cavalry from Fort Yates, and even as late as 1890, small groups of Crows in isolated hunting camps feared the Sioux, although the two tribes were then nominally at peace.

It is not easy to say from which branch of the Sioux these bands were most commonly recruited, but it is a safe guess that the "hostiles" of Standing Rock furnished their quota. The part the Crows had played in helping to drive them from the Big Horn country was fresh in their memory. Through long hostility to the government, their surrender, and successive removals from one place of detention to another, they had lost most of their best horses, but they were now in a position to recoup these losses, for the Crows were well supplied with the desired animals, and during the period of relative calm they had been lulled into a sense of false security.

Poor as they were in equipment, the Sioux had crafty

wits, stout legs, and an abounding hatred of their foe, and while the way was long, they knew every mile of it and every hiding place; if successful they could ride home. It is true there was the slight inconvenience of a few army posts, but Indians were clever at hiding their movements. Even Fort Custer, in the heart of the Crow country, at the junction of Big Horn and "Little Horn," did not appall them greatly, as the following incident, which happened but a few miles above, plainly shows.

Early one morning, a Crow, engaged in the usual morning exercise of looking for his horses down along the Little Big Horn, found among the chokecherry and bullberry bushes a strange horse, saddled, bridled, with lariat dragging. It was a horse which did not belong in that part of the country, and a closer inspection revealed a bandanna full of cartridges tied to the saddle bow.

Evidently a Sioux horse thief had left his mount during the night (for the raiders in this case had horses). The animal had doubtless strayed away and its owner, overtaken by daylight, had had to give up his search for it.

It was an easy capture of an enemy horse, but as one or two of his bitterest foes were probably crouched in the bushes not far away, it was not a spot where an unarmed Crow would delight to linger.

The camp, already astir, was soon fully aroused. Men who had gone out for their horses brought them in at full gallop; those who had kept up one or two riding animals during the night armed and mounted at once. Others running from their morning bath, waiting scarcely to don their breechclouts, snatched up their arms and were off.

The ground along the river was thoroughly beaten and searched until two Sioux were found lying close in a brushy bend, from which they fought so stubbornly that the Crows could not dislodge them without greater risk than they cared to take.

As the day wore on recruits kept arriving from other

camp; priests chanted and made medicine. Chiefs and camp-criers rode about shouting and transmitting orders; throngs in holiday spirit amused themselves wasting ammunition, firing from a safe distance at a foe they could not see.

At last the more experienced warriors began to realize the futility of the proceeding. Night was approaching, and during the darkness these enemies in all likelihood would slip safely away. Then what a story they would take home with them! A party of resolute men was selected, and after prayers and incantation they rode boldly through the brush. A few rapid shots, some shouts of victory, and when they emerged the Sioux were dead.

Toward evening the victors flocked to the trader's store. They were full of good-humored banter, and naturally expected to be congratulated on their success. Everyone was there, traders, agency employees, all interested in the details of the fight, and of course there was much handshaking. Now and again a white man, in answer to the friendly greeting of some Absaroke acquaintance, would grasp the hand held out from beneath the blanket and give it a hearty shake, to find the hand of a dead Sioux dangling limply in his own.

That night after dark there was not much roaming out of doors in the Crow camp. There was every reason to suppose that friends of the dead Sioux were not far off, and one or two scalps in exchange for those the Crows had taken would have been very acceptable. Surely enough, next day the bodies of the Sioux were found to have been covered during the night, each with a new blanket. This was a token of respect which Indians pay their dead when unable to carry them away, and showed plainly that some of the Sioux had been hidden in the vicinity, were fully acquainted with what had happened, and knew the exact location of the bodies.

A contradictory trait of Indian character is that much

as they like to rove at night, they are really afraid of the dark. Man is not a nocturnal animal, and the feeling is probably instinctive. We of superior culture may reason it away, but all the reasoning of primitive man only serves to confirm his dread. That enemies and beasts of prey may lurk in dark places he knows from experience, but to his way of thinking the danger from ghosts, witches, and other evil influences is no less real. This fear often keeps an Indian from examining too minutely into the cause of strange noises or mysterious movements in the darkness of the night. Under such conditions his dislike of prying into obscure corners and brushy hollows has helped the escape of many a horse thief.

The sound of a shot in the night or the rush of horses through the camp, far from causing the warriors to spring forth in search of a possible foe, is quite as likely to make them keep to the shelter of their lodges, or at most peer cautiously from under the door flap, for the Indian is naturally averse to offering himself as a target to an enemy he cannot see. After such a disturbance, like a bird which bursts into song when roused from its midnight slumber, some old man may sit up, stir the fire, and begin to sing, either because he cannot go to sleep again, or to warn the enemy, should there be any within hearing, that everyone is now wide awake, and he had better go away. Absurd as this may seem, it is based on pretty sound judgment, for if the camp turned out and began to search for the marauders, shooting at every suspicious object, the affair would soon take on the character of a suburban burglar hunt, in which every householder seen skulking behind the shrubbery would be in danger of being shot by his neighbor.

Ordinarily it was by no means safe to stumble on an enemy who was prowling in the camp; it might be his ambition to take a scalp, or, if he thought he was discovered, he would shoot to save himself. Generally, too, he had every advantage over his antagonist, whose form

he could see against the sky while he himself lay in the dark. Yet an experienced, cool-headed raider would take great chances rather than spoil the plans of his entire party by an untimely shot. If surprised, he would be guided by his knowledge of how he would act if conditions were reversed, and always in his favor was the fact that a blanketed figure lying in the shadows and evidently trying to avoid being recognized, would be, in ninety-nine cases in a hundred, a young buck whose purpose was nothing more sinister than the prosecution of an illicit love affair.

Bat-su' wa-nitc', an Absaroke [Crow] friend of mine, in whose lodge I stayed for a week or two, had the following experience on a raid against the Crows' inveterate enemy on the north, the Piegans.

He had crept into a Piegan camp where he found some horses in a brush corral. Noiselessly letting down the bars, he went inside to drive them out, but to his dismay some of them, crowding each other in the gateway, made such a noise striking their hoofs against the bars that the owner, in his lodge near by, was awakened, and came running to see what was the matter. The Crow heard him coming, but was unable to get out of the corral, the gate being full of struggling animals, and the walls strong and high and slanting inward. Realizing he was trapped, he ran to the darkest side of the enclosure, where, crouching with his blanket over his head and gun ready for action, he awaited the outcome.

The Piegan rushed in excitedly, caught sight of a dark mass huddled in the obscurity, stopped short, craned his head forward, and plied the ambushed Crow with a rapid fire of questions in a language he did not understand. Receiving no reply, the idea now seemed to dawn on him for the first time that he was dealing with a tribal enemy, and dashing out with loud shouts, he spread the alarm. *Bat-su' wa-nitc'* was not slow to profit by this opportunity. Escaping from the corral, he found his own horse where he

had left it, and springing on its back and whooping derisively, he made his escape.

In Indian warfare stealth and skill in concealment were regarded as of such paramount importance that the young men of the warlike tribes, even in time of peace, had a way of indulging in mysterious and apparently meaningless pranks which were in reality practice exercises to develop proficiency along these lines and test the vigilance of a hypothetical enemy. Many of their tricks could have no other conceivable purpose, for, while in peacetime they seemed mere childish play, they would be of definite value in the kind of warfare in which they took the greatest pride.

A successful scout should see everything without being seen, or at least without being recognized for what he is, for merely to be seen is not necessarily to be detected. An Indian, on encountering a stranger in a wild place, and believing himself unobserved, will often remain motionless among the logs and stumps to see if he will be discovered; not that he has any special reason for wishing to avoid notice, but simply as an experiment in camouflage, for no one knows better the concealing qualities of broken surfaces and light and shade.

While still quite young and inexperienced, I was out one day after deer. Reaching a sloping hillside commanding a view of the ground below, I seated myself on a log. I had been there perhaps fifteen minutes when a barely perceptible rustle at my back caused me to look around. There, almost at my elbow, stood an Indian who also had left camp that morning to look for deer. There was absolutely nothing unfriendly in his stealthy approach; he was the last man in the world I would suspect of any sinister motive. He only wished to demonstrate to himself, and to me, how easily I could be tomahawked from behind. No doubt in his youth he had had similar tricks played on him. That is why the Indian scout should never forget his rear.

In the old days, when camped among the Sioux, it was not unusual on awaking at night to find an Indian's head inside the tent or in process of being furtively withdrawn. The motive was scarcely curiosity, nor was it theft, for they did not steal from guests in their camps; it was just practice. They boasted of their ability, on war expeditions, to steal horses picketed within arm's length of their sleeping owners, and to creep up to, or even into, the enemy's lodge without being detected.

In this respect some tribes appear to have been more crafty than others. I would not assert that skill in this line had anything to do with plucked eyebrows, yet there seems to have been a difference between those who plucked the eyebrows and those who did not; not that pulling out the eyebrows made men more cunning in war; it was merely symptomatic of the same psychology which made them a terror to their enemies.

To the west were Flatheads [Salish], who never flattened the head, Nez Perces, who did not pierce their noses, and many other peoples, peace loving in the main, eager to accept Christianity and the better life and to improve their worldly condition by thrift and honest labor. Generally speaking, all these wore eyebrows; those to the east plucked them out. To the west the face was painted, if at all, to beautify it; to the east, frequently, to make it hideous and frightful, and along with the plucked eyebrows and terrifying face painting was usually found the roached head and the scalp lock, for with possible exceptions those who plucked the eyebrows seem also, at one time or other, to have shaved the head.

Even the Sioux, who for generations have worn the hair unshorn, once wore it roached. This may be definitely stated of the Ogallala (*vide* Lewis and Clark, who spell it *Okandanda* - *Okdada*, of the Yankton dialect), and we have it on the authority of Hennepin that the Santee Sioux, in 1680, also shaved the head; in fact, he gained

their good will by acting as their barber. It is more generally known that the Pawnees and most of the tribes to the east of them formerly roached the head.

When I first saw the Crows I was at once struck with their eyebrows. I had been accustomed to Indians without them, and, somehow, with them, the Crows did not look quite Indian. Also in their bearing and in that of most of the tribes to the west of them, there was an easy-going frankness in marked contrast with the suspicious, stoical aloofness of the tribes farther east. Possibly they felt it necessary to match their deeds to their horrifying appearance.

The thought has often occurred to me that to find anything approaching the stealthy, ear-to-the-ground "redskin" of our early novelists, the real "varmint" of the *Deerslayer*, one must look among the tribes of the plucked eyebrows.

Whether based on fact or pure myth the ear-to-the-ground tradition has been a persistent one, witness the following from Chateaubriand, *Voyage en Amérique* (Paris, 1828):

The guides had announced the coming of travellers who might be still two hours' walk from the place where we were. This fineness of hearing partakes of the prodigious; there are Indians who hear the step of another Indian at four and five hours distance, by putting the ear to the ground. As a matter of fact a family of savages did arrive at the end of two hours.

These may not have been the better horse thieves, but while it may be only a notion on my part, I am inclined to think that they were.

At night when the proximity of war parties was suspected, a man would picket one or two of his choicest animals—those trained to war or buffalo running, and racers—close to the front of his lodge and to the north of the doorway. Here they were not only available for instant use, but as the lodges invariably set facing the east, and the bed of the master of the household was to the right on

entering, horses thus picketed stood so near their owner as he slept that any unusual movement on their part would be likely to waken him. To steal them from such a position was a risky business but there were no precautions which were absolutely horsethief-proof.

It was the correct technique to cut rather than untie the rope, probably because a rope stiffened and shrunk with wet, and possibly frozen, is not easy to manipulate. Possibly, too, the thief preferred to taunt his enemy by cutting the rope, as this left no question as to what had happened, but if he untied it, it might be supposed that the animal had freed itself, and strayed away.

In the good old days there was hardly a period, however short, when a tribe was not more or less actively at war with one or more of its neighbors. Small bands of thieves often set out secretly without the approval of the head men of the tribe. This brought about strained relations between peoples inclined on the whole to be friendly, and as the injured party had no means of identifying the culprits, suspicion often rested on tribes who were innocent, or at least not guilty of that particular offense. At times, however, the raiders would purposely leave behind them an arrow, moccasin, or other article, the distinctive style of which could not fail to show their victims who it was who had despoiled them.

And often there is a grim humor in war, a humor which finds its keenest delight in the misfortunes of others. We have shown it on occasion by routing men, women, and children from their beds at dawn on a cold winter morning to the accompaniment of rifle fire and the rollicking strains of an Irish reel. The humor of the Indian horse thief is more subtle. If it was a good joke to capture from the owner of twenty head, three of his best horses, to set afoot in one night an entire camp, encumbered with their lodges and families, in a region of wide stretches from water to water, was excellent fooling. In such a case it was often

deemed appropriate to leave a lariat, a quirt, or other object about as useful in the circumstances as a fife to an armless man.

It was decidedly exasperating to step out in the morning to find at the spot where you picketed your best horse the night before nothing but the picket pin, the end of the lariat still securely attached to it by a knot of your own tying, but cut off about two feet from the pin. I was called early one morning to view such a scene. The thief had worked within ten feet of the owner as he lay in his lodge, and not a hundred feet from my own tent.

A skilled horse thief, before trying to steal horses tied so near a lodge, will sometimes take the precaution to peer inside to make sure that all are asleep, for Indians, the older men especially, have a way of sitting up at any time of night as the spirit moves them to smoke or doze by the fire. They do this quietly so as not to disturb the other members of the family, though often they will poke up the fire for light and warmth. Dogs, too, will steal in, lifting the door flap with their noses and squeezing through as noiselessly as they can for fear of being ordered out. All this tends to accustom the inmates to stealthy movements about the lodge, and helps the horse thief in his reconnoitering, as any slight noise he might make is likely to be attributed to one of the causes mentioned and the theft is not detected until morning.

The qualities which made an Indian notable among his own people were not always those which earned fame for him among the whites. One who had fasted often and long, who had remarkable revelations and powerful spirit guardians; one whose leadership had been successful, who had cured the sick, and been accurate in his predictions, was respected and in a sense feared. His Fight, Uncpapa Sioux, of Standing Rock, was such a man. Quiet in manner, slight in build, somewhat under average stature, and plain of features, he was nevertheless a man of note,

cover dimmed, went out. All around lay the dead hush of after midnight. The moment had come. Stooping with his rifle across his lap, he drew his knife and cut the tethering ropes close to the pin, leading away at a gentle walk two horses as good as ever were lifted from a Crow camp.



Picture Writing

THE Indians of the northern plains have a form of art which not only fills their need for pictorial expression, but to a limited extent takes the place of writing. Essentially it is a system of art narrative.

Successful portrayal of objects by drawing or painting requires training of mind and eye not merely on the part of the artist, but also of his public. This is less true of plastic art, for it is much easier to get a recognizable likeness of a frog, let us say, by squeezing a handful of clay into the form of that animal than to indicate it by lines drawn with chalk or charcoal; in fact the clay frog, if nearly the color and size of nature, might even be mistaken for a real one, as ducks are deceived by a decoy.

On the other hand, the uninitiated are puzzled by the flat surface of the picture or drawing and the fact that the image is usually less than life size, frequently far less. Primitive men and young children cannot grasp the meaning of a flat picture until taught to do so; animals, with rare exceptions, see only the surface on which it is painted. I have known a dog deceived by a life-sized painting of a bird on plain paper, without painted background, but the illusion lasted only till the canine nose, and closer inspection, detected the fraud.

A wild Indian is unable to see the image on the ground

glass of a camera at the first attempt; apparently he sees nothing but the glass, but, anyway, the machine is "medicine" to him, and he is generally so excited he does not know what he sees, and often he will hold a photograph sideways or upside down in an effort to make it out.

Finding it difficult to attain realism in his drawing, the Indian artist invents conventional signs and symbols to help tell his story, for with him it is the story that counts. He has no conception of "non-representational" abstractions in art. His pictures must mean something, though if they have decorative or esthetic qualities as well so much the better. In this way Indian art became more and more a thing of symbols better fitted for pictographs and mnemonic records than pictures in the ordinary sense, and, as many of these signs adapt themselves to ornamental patterns, they are often so used; thus decorative figures which seem to us meaningless may have a definite meaning to the Indian who has watched their evolution.

Almost always an Indian drawing relates in some concrete, personal way to the Indian who drew it, to his life history, his feats at arms, or his religious experiences. In a word, his art is mainly autobiographical, the principal figure in the picture usually being the artist himself. Each individual is thus his own artist and biographer, his art a record of his exploits and accomplishments.

Even so, some of their drawings are impersonal and intended only as "pretty pictures." This is most likely to be true, especially in recent years, of pictures made by young men and boys with lively imagination and ready access to drawing materials, but with no military or other important experiences to record. Such pictures are as realistic as the young artist can make them and are almost entirely devoid of symbolism.

Deeming his feats of arms of first importance, the maturer individual naturally devotes his best efforts to representations of himself in the act of dealing death and

destruction to the enemies of his tribe, or taking part in full regalia in the ceremonial dances of the warrior society to which he has the honor to belong, or, by showing their characteristic insignia, calling attention to the various grades into which he has been initiated, these corresponding somewhat to the degrees of freemasonry.

Lacking these greater claims to renown, the young man avails himself of his triumphs in love-making as a worthy motif, as conquests of this sort are, or were not so very long ago, counted a legitimate subject for boasting. Apart from the natural disapproval of those whose women-folk were directly endangered, the successful breaker of feminine hearts was regarded as a sort of popular hero. Maximilien tells us it was the custom with the *petits maitres* of the Mandans and Meunitarris to commemorate their adventures in the field of love by means of a stick ringed with a stripe of color for each victory, or by a bundle of smaller sticks, each of which, in that case, stood for a separate affair, and the same was formerly true of the Sioux.

The Northern plains Indian regards his drawing much as we do our writing—as a means of stating facts and relating events. The Sioux have one word which answers for our two verbs *draw* and *write*, and, in the form of a participle, for either *picture* or *letter*.

The Indian is very much inclined to draw things as he knows them to be rather than as they appear to the eye. Particularly is this the case in drawings made about the beginning of the last century, and especially those of horses and men mounted on horses. The horse was then a comparatively new arrival on the Northern plains, and the Indians had not yet had a chance to study the work of Catlin, Bodmer, and other artists who made stays of considerable length at such trading posts as Forts Pierre, Mandan, and Union. After the coming of the steamboat in 1831, the upper Missouri country was easy of access for

artists and students as far as the mouth of the Yellowstone, and the tribes which traded along this stretch of river made rapid progress in drawing, adopting many ideas from the white man's art, while fortunately developing a style which not only had striking merit, in a primitive way, but was essentially their own. On the other hand, there is little evidence of similar advancement among the tribes farther inland, as the Crows, Shoshones, and Bannacks.

At first the human figure was drawn with a body of rectangular shape, a globular head, and very slim legs and arms, the latter often bent at an angle suggesting a praying mantis. The head was commonly full face, with a mere hint of eyes, nose, and mouth. There was no curve or taper to the body of the horse, and this gave that animal also a rectangular appearance. Though the legs were nearly of the right proportion above, they tapered below to little more than the thickness of a line, and finished off with a peculiar buttonhook affair which was utterly meaningless to a white man.

When the man was represented as riding, the picture generally showed both his legs, although in nature one of them would be hidden behind the body of the horse. This made the rider seem to be sitting his mount sideways, and must have looked wrong to the artist, who, however, could see no way of remedying it without depriving the figure of one of his legs, a thing he was unwilling to do in view of the Indian's abhorrence of truncated extremities, and especially as the man in the picture usually represented the artist himself.

Much the same feeling, no doubt, makes the Indian object to posing for his portrait in profile, a tendency still noticeable in some tribes or with certain individuals, while it may also account for his dislike of shadows which tend to obscure details of feature or face paint. At times I have been all but thwarted in my efforts to paint an Indian "three quarters face" by his persistently turning the

farther side toward me so I might get a better view of it. On discovering that the artist does not wish him to do this, the sitter, unwilling to offend by open opposition, will sometimes try to accomplish his purpose by stealth, hoping that the painter, evidently absorbed in his work, may not notice the change, and so be tricked into doing him full face. Then, too, the artist's difficulties are often increased by the well-meaning zeal of the spectators who watch his every brush mark and report their opinions to the sitter who, not being able to see the picture, becomes frantic in his desire to turn the shadowed side of his face toward the light, or smooth the wrinkles in his costume. It is bad enough when all parties are friendly, but someone in the crowd may be envious or jealous. There is then a possibility of unpleasant developments, among the least of which may be the abrupt termination of the sittings, an annoyance I have several times experienced.

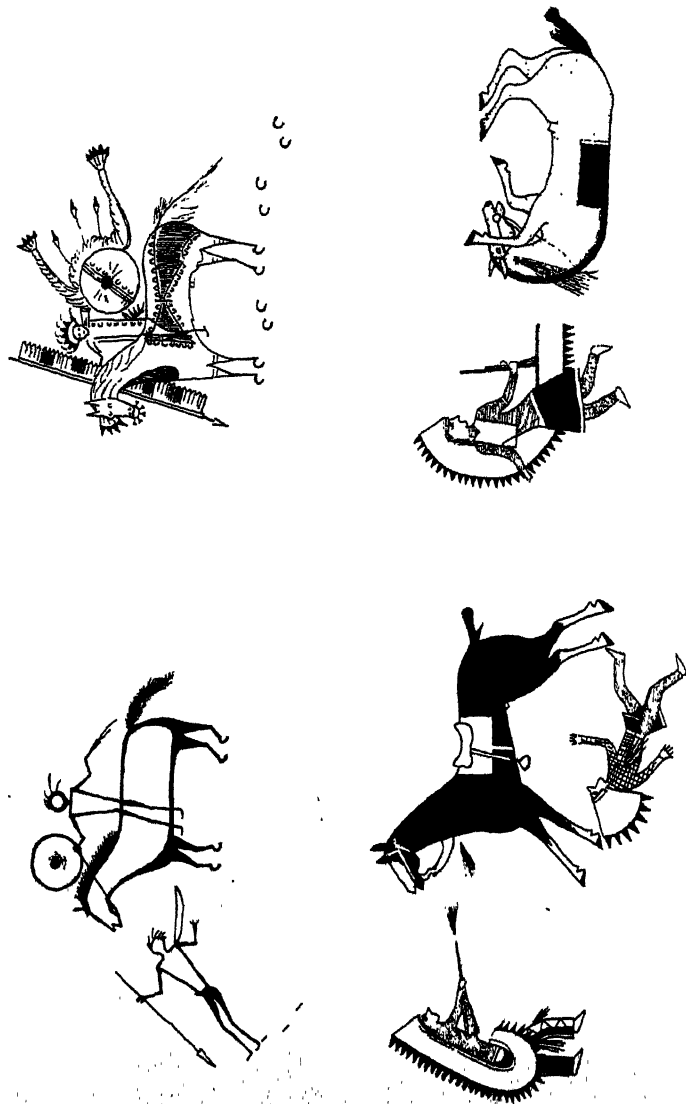
Among the more turbulent tribes there is even a chance that a sarcastic remark may fan into flame some long-smoldering quarrel. Unquestionably it was some such thing which led to the killing of *Mah-to-tchee-ga*, as related by Catlin.*

The incident was so explained by Catlin, though it was seized upon by others to prove that the Sioux of that period were not accustomed to seeing the human face portrayed in profile, which of course is absurd as contemporary drawings of several tribes show, though it does indicate a preference for full-face portraits.

Catlin had painted this man nearly in profile, one half the face in shadow, which prompted the sarcastic remark from a jealous rival that he was "only half a man." Garrick Mallery† is inclined to doubt the story, but to me the affair seems so characteristic I see no reason to doubt it. I

* Catlin, *Letters and Notes on North American Indians*, London, 1841, Vol. II, p. 190.

† Mallery, *Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology for 1888-'89*, p. 741.



A Hundred Years' Evolution of Indian Art

Top, left: Painting on buffalo robe in Trocadéro Museum, Paris. Early 19th century. Top, right: Painting on Pawnee buffalo robe (Catlin) about 1834. Bottom: Buffalo robe painting by Cloud Eagle, Brulé Sioux, 1901.

have known trouble of similar kind caused by much less, but in that case the Indian's face was only powder marked.

The ball-like full face, so typical of the early Indian drawings, began, about 1830, to give place to the profile. The change was gradual, and in some tribes did not come till later, but eventually it was so complete that the full face in drawings made within the last sixty years is unusual.

The Indian artist also became reconciled to the fact that when a horse and rider are seen in side view—and it was so he almost invariably drew them—one of the rider's legs is necessarily hidden behind the horse, and the practice of showing both legs was abandoned, though I have a drawing made by an Omaha as late as 1883, which shows that in some quarters the old notion was slow to give way. This drawing also exhibits in modified form several of the archaisms already referred to, such as the square-bodied man and horse, the lower legs of the latter tapering to a hair's breadth and ending in something approximating a hoof, but much too small. This last feature evidently marks a transitional stage between the fairly realistic hoof of the latter half of the nineteenth century and the hook-like appendage of an earlier period.

The explanation of this hooklike foot is this: it was not intended for a foot at all, but a *track*. At the beginning of the last century the Northern tribes had but recently come into possession of the horse, and had not yet learned to draw it in a way which thoroughly satisfied them; in fact, as they then depicted it, it looked as much like a cow elk as anything else, and while one might suppose that the greater length of the tail would have identified it sufficiently, the Indian artist apparently did not think so. The most distinctive feature of the new quadruped, and that which set it apart most effectually from all other animals the Indian had previously known, was its undivided foot. The elk, buffalo, and deer had four toes to each foot, the antelope two, which was sufficiently remarkable, but

the horse, wonderful as it must have seemed, had only one, and it was this peculiarity, revealing itself so strikingly in its track, which the artist sought to indicate by attaching the animal's *track* to the end of its leg, as a symbol, to distinguish it beyond question, rather than attempt a realistic portrayal of the hoof as it appears in nature.

This was only an adaptation of the established custom of using the track of a bird or animal as the hieroglyph, or sign, of that bird or animal. After a time, perhaps through his own observation of nature, but more probably through the influence of the white man's pictures, the Indian learned to draw the horse's foot more nearly as it really looks to the eye. In spite of this undeniable foreign influence, the art thus developed embodies many characteristics which are purely native and original, and in a decorative sense, and in its own peculiar way, unquestionably fine.

The ideographic possibilities of Sioux art are strikingly shown in the delineation of proper names. Many such, like Sitting Bear, or Feather Earring, are fairly easy to express in this way. His Fight [or Battle] would seem to offer almost insurmountable difficulties, but even this can be shown by the use of symbols and a little ingenuity. Horse tracks coming toward each other and dashes denoting the flight of bullets or arrows represent a battle, while a hand extended as if grasping the battle indicates possession or ownership. In the author's opinion this is not precisely the idea conveyed by the name *O-ki-tcin' Ta'-wa* (as explained elsewhere, in *His Fight, Warrior and Medicine Man*), though it does express the common English rendering of it. However, it was the Indian's own conception, and, as he seemed satisfied with it, it would be presumptuous to criticize.

Most frequently this system is used to identify the hero in drawings of exploits. Sometimes the name is put at the bottom of the picture or near one corner, but more



Drawings by His Fight.

Stealing the Medicine Dogs

Below: His Fight captures Medicine Dogs. Above: His Fight and the two faithful Crows.

commonly it is placed either above the head of its owner or back of him. In either of the last two positions it is generally connected by a line with the head or mouth of the figure. In the sign language the verb to *speak* is expressed by placing the index finger before the mouth and moving it forward about four inches, as though the words were issuing from the mouth. To *talk* would be expressed by repeating this motion two or three times, and to convey the idea of *calling* it is extended farther out, and slightly upward, to suggest the sound going to a distance. To carry the illusion still farther the motion becomes gradually slower toward the end. Thus a line from the mouth of the figure to a small picture of a sitting bull, for example, would mean that the man so represented *calls himself* Sitting Bull. A connection of this sort can often be traced between the gestures of the sign language, the symbols used in their pictures, and signals they employ to communicate information to a distance.

In military exploits as commonly depicted the enemy is usually shown on foot or dismounted, running away, dead on the ground, or wounded with feet kicking in the air, and the figure is often slighted in various ways by the artist who devotes his best efforts to glorifying the hero, which is natural, the brave deeds he is immortalizing being almost invariably his own or those of some close friend or relative. The hero as a rule is mounted, his horse facing the left. On a buffalo robe showing several episodes the horses will be running toward the head of the robe, so that as the garment is worn customarily the battle appears to be raging in a sunwise circle around the body of the wearer.

The great number of brave acts thus boasted by a single individual may often be accounted for by the fact that all coups or feats of arms performed by his followers are counted to the credit of the partisan or leader, and often the hair is shown gathered in a knot above the head to show

that on that occasion he was the partisan. If the man is shown carrying a pipe it has the same meaning.

The reason for presenting the left side of horse and rider is because the bow, gun, and lance were used on that side, and because this was the side toward the enemy. The shield was also commonly worn on the left side, though it could be swung in any direction. Long war bonnets were made with the top of the feathers, the more presentable side, toward the left, while the tail hung preferably on the left side of the horse. The lance was not couched under the right arm in the European fashion, but was held more like a pitchfork or fish spear, often with the butt in the palm of the right hand, and on favorable opportunity, was "pumped" or "churned" into the enemy's vitals after the manner of the old-time whalerman lancing a whale.

A series of episodes are portrayed in order of their occurrence, from right to left; and to tell the whole story in one drawing, actions which took place before or after that in which the hero is shown engaged are represented by symbols. In this manner it is possible to include in a single picture two or three tenses, as, let us say, pluperfect, past, and present, or past, present and future.

The conclusion is inevitable that some of these symbols are similar to, and perhaps have been borrowed from, those used in our political caricatures and lampoons, or, worse yet, that the Indian picture writing has much in common with our modern "comic strip," with the difference, of course, that the Indian's purpose is a serious one. Even so, we may derive some consolation from the fact that he does not make use of "wham," "bam," and "awk," nor put stars and exclamation points around the victim's head to indicate the force of a blow.

The discharge of a gun is represented by a sign which we ourselves have used for at least two hundred years, a number of lines diverging fan shape from the muzzle. This symbol is sometimes shown without any apparent

connection with a gun, in which case it shows that a gun was fired at the time and place indicated. In the same way a bow, whip, or club in contact with the enemy's head or shoulders means that he was struck with that implement while it was in the hands of its owner, even though it may be pictured as ten feet away from him, and not, as is commonly thought, that the object was thrown by its owner in his eagerness to be first to strike.

Frequently the whip is shown in contact with the enemy's body at the moment the hero is depicted as shooting him, it being understood that in the ordinary course of events the shooting preceded the striking.

The primitive tribes had no conception of perspective, and seldom was there any attempt at foreshortening. Objects were never drawn small in order to convey the impression of distance. In a line of tracks coming from a distance, those farthest away, contrary to all rules of perspective, are drawn as large as those close at hand, the artist knowing that footprints, far or near, are the same in size. It is another case of drawing things as you know them to be rather than as you see them.

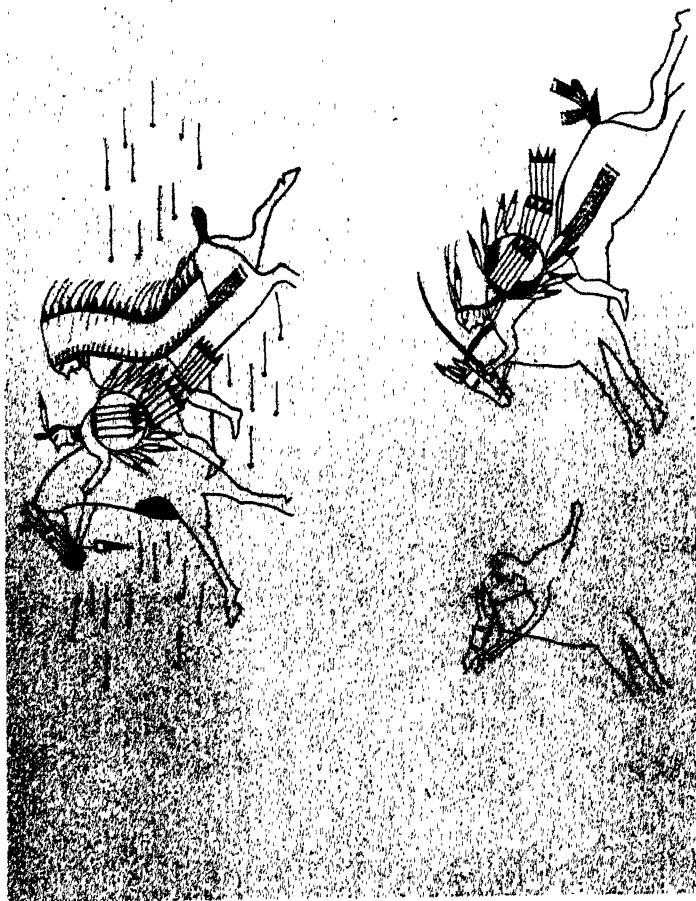
In the drawing by His Fight, although the horse of his Crow adversary seems to be separated from his own by only a head, the angle of forty-five degrees at which he is aiming his arrow would indicate a distance of little less than two hundred yards. The long curved staff wound with otter skin and ornamented with eagle feathers and tufts of ermine, which the hero carries, is the distinctive ensign or banner of one of the warrior societies. It is the sacred duty of the man to whom it is entrusted to see that no harm befalls it; he must never abandon it. The horse tracks retreating before him show that he was the last of his party to leave the field. The tribe of the enemy is shown by the characteristic hair dressing.

In this case only the head was needed to designate the tribe. So, too, the head of a horse or buffalo is often used

instead of the track as a sign for the animal. The picture of His Fight on a successful horse raid is an example of this, only the heads being deemed necessary to indicate the number and color of the animals. In this drawing the hero wears a white blanket capote with "capushaw" [*capuchon*], the customary garment for horse-stealing expeditions, and carries a repeating rifle and a lariat, the latter a necessary adjunct of the horse thief and the symbol of his calling. He also wears a wolf or coyote skin (the wolf being the scout or spy among animals) and the ornamental sash with feathered tails, called the "crow," though why so called I do not know, as I have never seen one which included in its make-up any part of a crow. On the contrary, the affair is usually composed of horse tails and the feathers of hawks, great horned owl, golden eagle, and sometimes bald eagle. The crow is worn in the dances in which the warriors boast of their exploits, and probably is introduced here as a symbol.

Maximilien says of it: "The singular object which the Anglo-Americans call the 'Crow,' which is worn by the nations of the Mississippi and lower Missouri, is absolutely unknown among the nations of the upper Missouri, that is to say among the Dakotas, the Assiniboin, the Crows, the Mandans, the Ariccaras and the Blackfeet." The "crow" is merely a translation of the Sioux name for it and not an invention of the Anglo-Americans. Certainly the crow was well established among the Dakota in 1884, and for years before that. They may have acquired it along with the Omaha Dance, and at the present time it is probably known to all the tribes mentioned by Maximilien as having no knowledge of it in 1833. This shows how dances and ceremonies, with their songs and paraphernalia, are sold from tribe to tribe, and in time spread over a wide area.

Some of the Indian's best art efforts are the designs used in decorating costume, and for similar purposes. Many of these are conventional geometric patterns having



Drawings by His Fight.

Gymkhana Race.
Chasing the White Man.
Field sports near Fort Buford, 1868.

no special meaning; others, especially the more realistic, often stand for personal experiences—military or religious.

A design may have a universally accepted meaning, or a number of meanings, among which may be found some based on individual whim, or on a dream, so that the significance of a given symbol is not necessarily the same under all circumstances; and because a design may have some connection with a religious idea it is often impossible to get a satisfactory explanation of it from any but the original owner-wearer, or, as one might say, inventor. Others are reluctant to hazard an opinion. They may go so far as to say that "the man probably saw it in a dream," but farther than that they will not venture, lest they give offense to some supernatural power by tampering with something which does not concern them and in the management and propitiation of which they have not been initiated. It is the primitive man's ever present dread of violating some one of the innumerable taboos.

In one instance in particular I had difficulty in getting information of this kind. It involved two old shirts of dressed skin and the designs worked upon them, one in porcupine embroidery, the other, in beadwork. Both are of the same size, small for a grown man, and as both were found together in a very small collection, it is reasonable to infer that they were made for the same individual. From the little which could be learned of their origin they are probably at least sixty-five years old, and possibly much older.

On one of these shirts the design in porcupine quills obviously refers to a bear or bears, the large bear tracks, if nothing else, showing that the owner, through prayer, fasting, and sacrifice, had won the good will of the spirit bear and been befriended and helped by him. The tracks on both the front and back of the shirt lead toward the shoulders, where an entire figure of a bear is shown, one on each shoulder. These bears are red, and on the body of

each is a small triangular figure of a different color, representing the heart. This seems to have been the sign, with many tribes, to indicate that the creature so depicted is a spirit devoid of substance, the heart being visible through the ethereal body. (The Sioux, in their designs, show a feather attached to the head of the spirit animal, the airy lightness of the down feather being symbolic of the spirit.) The meaning of the four small squares on each of the embroidered strips is not clear. They may stand for so many days of fasting, or for the shelter in which the devotee passed his nights. At all events, the line from the bear's mouth to one of the squares shows that the animal is speaking, or delivering some verbal message to the person or thing residing in, or in some way connected with, or represented by, the square.

The significance of the design on the other shirt is less certain, though assuming that this garment belonged to the same man, it is not illogical to conclude that the groups of dark lines on a white ground are also bear symbols representing the claw marks of the bear on the white aspen bark, and conveying the general meaning that the wearer enjoyed the supernatural protection of the bear. Indians have a gesture which is equivalent to a silent benediction. It consists in passing the hands downward from the head and over the shoulders and arms of the favored one. The custom is widespread; the Sasquesahanocks, in 1608, showed their esteem for Captain John Smith by "stroking their ceremonious hands about his necke," and it is conceivable that the signs on this shirt are meant to show that the wearer had been thus blessed by the bears.

I submitted the question to Topompy, an intelligent man, chief of the Lemhi Shoshones, whom I had known for years. I was sure he would not willingly disappoint me, yet his reply betrayed the usual reticence. In substance it was this: "These shirts are very old; they were not made by our tribe, and, as you know, different tribes have

different language and customs. If I knew what these things mean I would tell you, but I do not know and do not wish to guess." This was so indisputable and apparently final that in order to continue the discussion I was forced to offer suggestions and ask a few leading questions, a thing which, ordinarily, I would avoid.

Calling his attention to the dark vertical lines in the white beadwork, I said I thought they looked like bear's scratches in the bark of an aspen tree, a common sight in the mountains where bears are numerous. He answered that he knew that bears sometimes "act like human beings," for he had seen scratches in the bark where a bear had "danced on the pine tree." The "old Indian" who owned the shirts "must have known the ways of bears," he thought. Maybe he had killed many of them, and perhaps he had been scratched by them, or he may have been "friends with bears," or "the bear might have spoken to him once in a while in a dream." Manifestly, this is as full and honest an opinion as an Indian could give under the circumstances, and few would have attempted that much.

The figure of a buffalo on a girl's dress, used by the Sioux in the red-ball game, also has religious significance inasmuch as the ceremony is held in fulfillment of a vow. Here the spiritual character of the animal is indicated by the eagle feather on its head. Brilliantly colored stripes surrounding the figure represent the rainbow, which is frequently used as a border for this type of dress design, and, curiously enough, is often shown with the curve inverted, even where such inversion is not needed to adapt it to the requirements of the design.

The beaded moccasins of Many Roads—*Ta Tcan-ku' O'-ta*, literally "His Roads (to war are) Many"—commemorate one of his war expeditions. The white ground means snow, indicating that it was in winter. The dark line through the center is his road or warpath leading to triangular figures in green representing mountains covered

with pine and fir timber, which is a way of saying that the expedition was against the Piegiens who live near the Rocky Mountains. Thinking that these green triangles piled one on the other gave a better impression of pine trees than of mountains, I asked the old partisan if he did not really mean them for trees on the mountains. "No," he said, "they are mountains." The horse tracks are for horses stolen from the enemy and brought home in triumph.

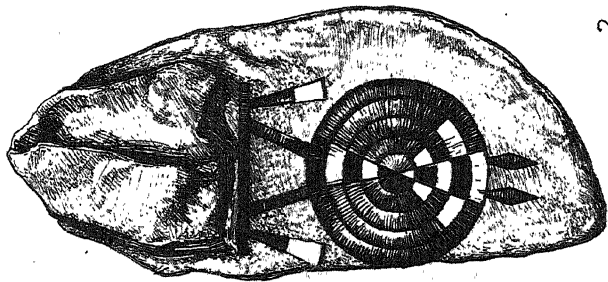
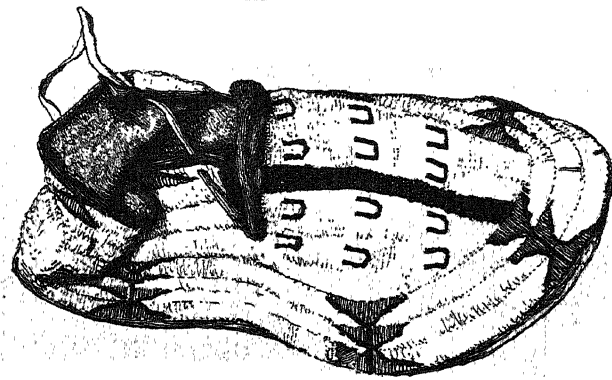
Once an Indian has read into a design the meaning he intends it to convey he is not to be shaken by any tactless suggestion that his mountains look more like pine trees, that some are upside down, or that the tracks of his captured horse herd lead toward the enemy's camp instead of away from it. It is not a matter for argument; the design means what it means.

As already said, many figures used in ornamenting costume, lodge covers, and shields have been so modified by long use as to be unrecognizable except to those familiar with their meaning, but in other cases the meaning is obvious enough once it is explained.

In the latter class is the disklike moccasin decoration widely distributed across the Northern plains, from the lower middle courses of the Missouri, north and west to the Rocky Mountains and beyond. Among some of the tribes of this broad area it may have meanings in addition to those enumerated below, and possibly ceremonial or religious significance, as with the Blackfoot, who, according to Grinnell, use it as a sun symbol.

The four explanations which follow I have gathered from the Brulé Sioux.

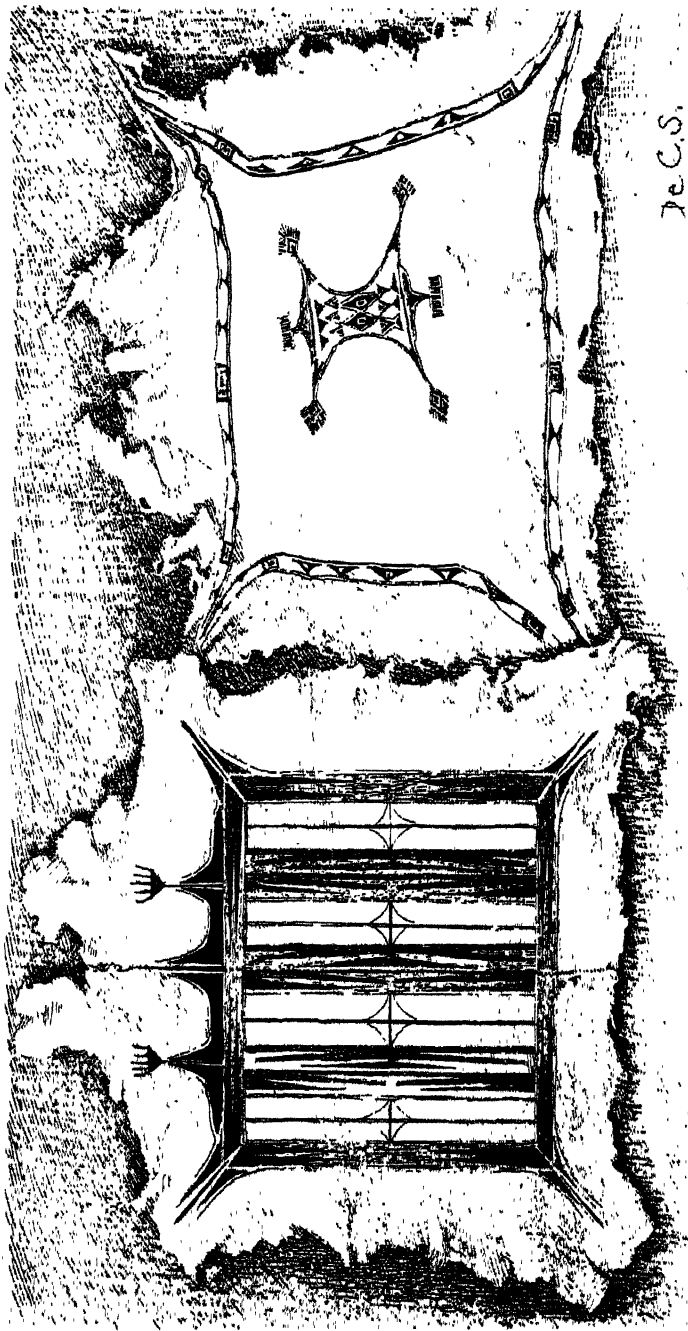
1. A shield with feathers attached hung upon a pole or tripod.
2. The hoop and darts used in the hoop game.
3. The *Ho-tco'-ka*, or tribal circle, grouped according to bands, with the "soldiers' tipi" in the middle.
4. The buffalo pound with V-shaped wings leading to



2.

Moccasin Designs

Left: Pictorial record of a winter war path. Right: Circular symbol having several meanings.



De C.S.

Painted Designs Conventionalized

Left: Design (meaning unknown) on a buffalo robe resembling Mandan robes of the 18th century, in Trocadéro Museum, Paris. Right: Design probably representing the spider's web. Both robes found in Paris, about 1886.

it, into which the buffalo were lured, or driven, and finally slaughtered.

As the hoop game was sometimes played ceremonially to call the buffalo in times of scarcity, it would appear that the second, third, and fourth interpretations may have had a symbolic association with the formal buffalo hunts, which of course were a matter of first importance to the people of the plains who depended on them so largely for food, clothing, and shelter. The meat and skins of the buffalo furnished all these, while the sinew provided thread and bowstrings, the cartilage, glue, the bone and horn, material for many useful implements and utensils. In fact it is wonderful how many of their daily needs were supplied by this animal. The V-shaped feature of the figure is often small or almost lacking in examples from the Sioux, but with the tribes farther north and west it is much longer, as though giving prominence to the buffalo pound idea. This is particularly noticeable in the moccasins of the Assiniboin and plains Cree, and these tribes, especially the Assiniboin, were early travelers credited with great skill in the art of impounding buffalo.

An excellent example of a design conventionalized beyond all recognition is the spider web on an old buffalo robe found in Paris about 1886. It is most likely a robe such as was worn by the owner of a medicine bow, or bow lance, described by Clark Wissler.*

For the design on another robe, also found in Paris about the same time, the author would not venture to suggest a meaning, though it is reasonable to suppose that it had one. This robe resembles specimens in the Trocadero Museum attributed to the Mandan of the thirteenth century. The colors are red, green, and black.

While in much of the Indian's art, especially that which deals with religious concepts, colors are used symbolically,

* Wissler, *Some Protective Designs of the Dakota*, Anthropological Papers, American Museum of Natural History, New York, 1907, Vol. I, Part 2.

in the majority of cases they are employed solely for their decorative value, and often with little regard for the natural tint of the thing depicted. Thus on a painted buffalo robe showing a number of horses, some will be of the liveliest yellow, red, blue, and even green. A yellow horse or a red horse is conceivable, even a blue horse, for both Indians and whites speak of a delicate mouse-colored gray as blue, but unless we assume an utter disregard for truth, we can hardly imagine a green horse.

To an Indian, however, this may not sound so absurd. The Sioux have one word, *to*, for both blue and green. The sky and the grass are both *to*. A Sioux chief may color his war shirt to represent the earth and the sky. The lower part will be painted a pale brownish tone, or the buckskin, unpainted, will represent the earth, or it may be tinted yellow to indicate the ground covered with dry grass. The upper part, which stands for the sky, is of course painted the appropriate sky color. The sky being blue, and blue being *to*, the upper part of the shirt is painted *to*, with the perfectly logical result that it is quite as likely to be green as blue, though neither the blue nor the green commonly used bear the remotest likeness to the actual color of the sky except in name.

As a matter of fact, on certain days, at certain hours, and in certain parts of the heavens, the sky *is* green. Furthermore, in practice at least, it is impossible to draw a definite line between blue and green. Blue merges into green by the admixture of increasing proportions of yellow, through intermediate tones which may with equal truth be described as greenish blue or bluish green. The Sioux knew this and when they needed to specify green they said "*to zi*"—[yellow blue]." They had names for all the primary colors, of course, and by combining these, and qualifying them with various adjectives, they could describe tints and hues as well as we, which is to say as well as could be done in words.



His Fight—Warrior and Medicine Man

IN MY opinion His Fight is a bungling translation of *O-ki-tcin Ta'-wa*. Wrong translations of Indian names were common in the old days. Interpreters, even when capable of nice distinctions, rarely took the trouble to make them. As a result, Indian names as we know them in English are often misleading, and this is true especially of those most firmly established by long usage.

Old Man, or Young Man Afraid of His Horses, is an example of this. In Sioux it is *Ta Cun'-ka Ko-kǎ'-pa-pi*, [They Fear His Horses]—nothing whatever about “man,” young or old. Similarly, *He' Yu-ke'-la* [Having Horns or With Horns] is translated “Man With Horns,” presumably to indicate that it is a man’s name, though it does not mean that the man so named has horns, nor is the idea of “man” in any way implied. The reference is probably to some young animal, a deer possibly, or an antelope.

His Fight, also rendered “His War,” should be “The War’s” or “The Battle’s”—“The Battle’s Own” would be a fair equivalent, but what rough old plainsman would connive at such a poetic flight of fancy!

Not knowing the Sioux original, we shall not attempt an analysis of the Ogallala name, Fighting Cuss; we can only imagine the kind of mentality responsible for it and the type of official who could perpetuate it on the agency

rolls. Only when we realize that some government school-teacher may later name this man's granddaughter Birdie or Queenie Fighting Cuss can we fully grasp the enormity of it.

There are of course names which are untranslatable, and some which will not bear translating in polite English, but as most Indians have more than one name, this difficulty generally can be overcome.

However, in order to avoid a break with tradition; and so that his old friends may know about whom we are talking, we shall continue to call our man His Fight, and that there may be no mistake in his identity, it may be added that he was an Uncpapa of Standing Rock, for there were men of other bands who had the same name.

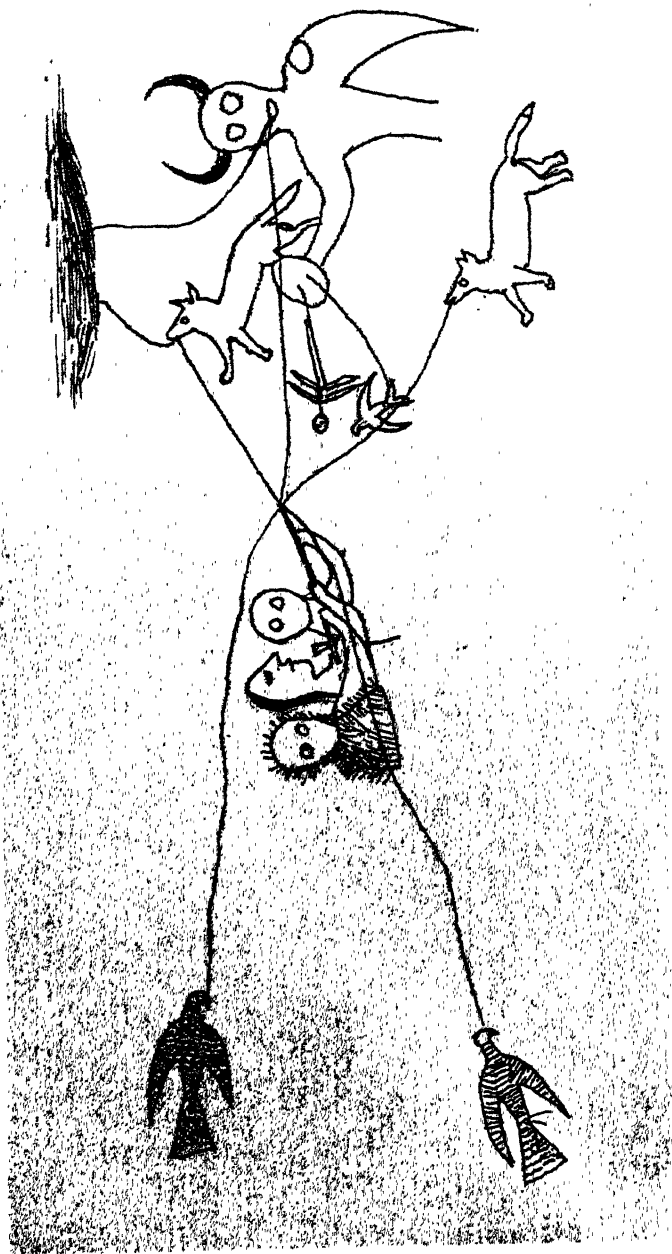
His Fight was a brother of Sitting Bear and Hawk Man. Their father, Long Soldier, was noted for his great stature and a supposed irascible disposition toward the whites, though I suspect this was largely a pose, as he was always friendly enough with me. Sixteen years before, a brother of Long Soldier had made a name for himself by shooting and killing a young fellow named Cook, a herder at the old Grand River agency. Long Soldier's hostility showed itself less violently and in the main harmlessly. He generally carried a stout iron rod, like a T-shaped poker, each point of which was nicely sharpened. This effective-looking pogamoggan, in combination with his heroic build and habitual expression of an ill-tempered dyspeptic, filled the hearts of newcomers and raw recruits with respectful awe. No doubt the memory of his brother's exploit also helped; at any rate there were many stories of his fondness for terrifying strangers. He could be brutally discourteous, but if anyone dared to repay him in kind he seemed delighted.

Sitting Bear was killed in battle with the Crows, while counting coup on one of them with his whip.

Hawk Man, youngest of the three, used to call me



His Fight, Sioux Warrior, and Medicine Man.



The supernatural visions of His Fight.

Center, His Fight; right, Cedar Spirit; left, Pipe-stone spirit. Lines from bird and animal spirits show they accepted the offering.

Younger Brother. He was affable, plausible, and picaresque. Once, under the nose of trader and clerk, he "removed" a fifty-pound sack of flour from the counter of the agency store. The man who went after him on horseback overtook him two miles below the fort, trudging unconcernedly along, with his blanket belted at the hips and a suspicious bulge at the small of his back. Hawk Man explained good-naturedly that he remembered leaning against the counter, and, the store being warm, lowering his blanket from his shoulders. It was then, he thought, that the sack of flour must have slipped under it, or possibly some joker had put it there, without his noticing it. He was the hero of many a tale of ingenious roguery.

The Hawk Man of this earlier period had no claim to distinction. He had the sun-dance scars on his breast, and the many small scars on his upper arms where bits of skin had been sacrificed, but he had no war record. Later he served as scout at Fort Yates, and, as special Indian policeman at the time of Sitting Bull's arrest, carried dispatches from Grand River to Standing Rock, returning the same day to take part in the fighting next morning. On this occasion he covered on horseback a hundred and fifteen miles or more in less than twenty-four hours, besides taking part in the skirmish which ended the life of Sitting Bull.

The previous summer I saw him near Flying By's camp on Grand River, making some vow or petition to the Lightning. Stripped to the breechcloth, his body painted with white earth which gave it a peculiar pale pinkish color, he stood buffeted by storm and wind, his head bowed against a long, slender staff from which snapped and fluttered banners of white and blue cloth. Knowing as I did the fear these people have of *Wa-ki'-yan*, their Thunder God, I felt a respect I had not before known for the man who was thus offering himself, perhaps, as a sacrifice.

His Fight had already won the esteem of his people for virtues peculiarly Indian, but had never to any extent attracted the attention of the whites, nor, to judge from his bearing toward them, had he any desire to do so. He was not so much unfriendly as indifferent, and it was some time before I came to know him. Then he took to frequenting my quarters in the old log mess house, and I found him to be an interesting and agreeable companion, eager to get my opinions, and—what suited my purpose admirably—even more so to explain his own. In spite of his complete ignorance of English and my very limited knowledge of Sioux, we actually conversed; just how I can hardly explain, but by dint of his help with the Dakota, by signs, and even diagrams and sketches, we got on famously. Two men determined to understand each other will find some way of doing so, though they have to invent a language for the purpose. It was not exactly necessary for us to do this, but I am sure he stripped his Dakota to the bare essentials for my benefit, and that I created grammatical forms till then unknown to the language.

Of course I had other teachers, for there were Indians in my room almost constantly, and I was often in their camps, in addition to which I had a copy of Major Powell's *Introduction to the Study of Indian Languages*. I wrote down the words as I acquired them, and I was sincerely anxious to learn. Little wonder that at the end of the first six months the Indian trader told me I had learned more in that period than he had in six years, which was not overstating the case, since he knew little more than enough to trade coffee, sugar, list cloth, and beads for buffalo robes and beaver skins.

Every wild Indian was an artist, more or less. He could watch the work of draftsman or painter and see precisely how it was done; there was no mystery about it, only skill. My brother's photography was *wa-kan'* [medicine magic]; my painting was *wai-yu'-pi-ka* [skill-

ful]. Nevertheless, I have often thought the old-time medicine man looked upon the painter of pictures and writer in books, as, like himself, a dabbler in mysteries. I believe His Fight had some such notion about me, for besides being a warrior of note, he was a "medicine," or holy, man. That he was an artist as well goes without saying. His drawings, I admit, were not quite equal in grace of line to some of the best Sioux art of that period, but they were probably better than the average, and served well their purpose of illustrating his war exploits and religious experiences. When I say war, I mean more specifically stealing horses, for most of his feats of arms were of that category, though he also had a fair list of sanguinary deeds to his credit. And by religious experiences I mean his long fasts and prayerful vigils, which were rewarded by dreams in which gods and spirits visited him and promised him their help.

On first acquaintance I did not realize I was dealing with a medicine man, for medicine man he surely was if ever there was one. I had been led to suppose that men of his class, the "paw-waws" of the early New Englanders, the "jongleurs" of the French, were repulsive charlatans, mercenary impostors, or deluded fanatics verging on madness, dressed in uncouth tatters dangling with bird skins, rats, and rattlesnakes. Such medicine men there may have been once, but His Fight did not appear to be of that kind. For that matter, the terms "medicine" and "medicine man" are poor makeshifts invented to describe something we do not fully understand, and which our forefathers, no doubt considering it all the work of the devil—for they too were strong believers in magic—thought it their bounden duty to misunderstand. The medicine man was really one who had been favored with supernatural revelations, and, through them, the power to work wonders or miracles. Therapeutics, in the ordinary sense, scarcely entered into it at all. His cures of disease were brought about more by

what we might call divine healing than by simples and lotions, though these were used also, but not so much for their actual medicinal value as their fancied magical association. So ginseng, though having practically no medicinal properties, was used by the Eastern Indians, as by the Chinese, as a remedy for human ailments, because the form of its larger roots sometimes suggests the human body with its arms and legs.

Yet it was a common popular belief up to a generation or so ago, that Indians had knowledge of curative herbs which our own physicians did not possess. With a few possible exceptions this is fallacy, but if our laws did not prevent it we should probably, even now, be having the old Indian medicine shows just as we formerly did, and they would not lack customers.

In the case of His Fight I think the term "holy man" would be more appropriate. I do not refer to his sanctity, though I cannot recall anything particularly unsaintlike about him, but rather to the fact that he seemed to have set himself apart to the service of his deities, or guardian spirits. Serious minded, and I believe honest in his pretensions, he appeared to regard himself merely as an agent of the supernatural ones, chosen to work their wonders for the benefit of his people. His war expeditions and his horse stealing were undertaken in a spirit of patriotism, or loyalty, to his tribe, and almost as a religious duty. I know he bargained in advance for the fees he was to receive for his "medical" services, but I am sure, this question once settled, he gave of his best professional skill, and he guaranteed no cures. Unlike many men—I was about to say, of the primitive tribes—he never boasted of his success with women, in fact never spoke of them. I have a complete set of his drawings, a kind of pictorial autobiography, and excepting one where he is represented as counting coup on a Crow man and woman, and another showing his wife riding dutifully behind him carrying his spear, there are

no woman figures in any of them. In such a collection most men would show one or more pictures of themselves grasping a girl by the wrist—which had a certain significance in their sign language and art—or holding her enveloped in their large courting blanket. The fewer the war exploits an individual had to his credit the more space he would devote to his amatory prowess, and of course the only adventures of the sort so recorded were illicit intrigues involving strategy and a certain amount of risk, love-making *selon les convenances* being too safe and prosaic to be worthy of record.

With the Sioux, as with many other tribes, it was the custom for young men to perform some fast or abstinence in the hope of having a dream which would reveal the particular spirit, or spirits, which were to watch over and guide their destinies. Frequently but one spirit would appear and take pity on them, promising them help in emergencies in return for special offerings, prayers, or other ritual, or the observance of certain taboos. Usually the devotee was given a "medicine" song or chant to be used in connection with these, and sometimes he was directed to gather together a number of articles in the form of a sacred bundle. It was a kind of personal religion, and often more or less secret. One thus favored, or obsessed, lived in fear of violating, inadvertently perhaps, some of these numerous obligations. Any idiosyncrasy in his conduct was attributed to his medicine, and respected by friends and neighbors not so much for fear of offending him as of displeasing the spirit which imposed it. Not only did they dread violating the taboos they knew; they were in equal fear of those they did not know.

On one occasion a Shoshone Indian supped with evident satisfaction on a stew I concocted with canned oysters, but only after he had studied the picture on the label and listened to my description of the animal he was about to eat. Next morning he came to my tent with a

story of a sleepless night, during which he imagined that oysters were whispering their reproaches in his ear. I reminded him that he had also had three cups of strong coffee, and it was this, coupled with his uneasy forebodings, that kept him awake.

Among the Crows there seems to be a taboo against the eating of birds. Once when I was sharing the small hunting lodge of *Bat-su'-wa-nitc* in the mountains at the head of Lodge Grass, his wife's eyes became inflamed by the smoke. Overlooking the real and very obvious cause, she at once traced it to the fact that she had eaten some prairie chicken I had shot. There is a clan of the Omaha which cannot eat buffalo calf, or veal, and with the Sioux only a brave man dares kill a weasel or ermine. Many similar cases could be cited.

There are places, generally on high land or in remote, unfrequented spots, which are supposed to be especially favored by the animal gods. I saw one on a high bluff overlooking the Missouri where Indians had resorted for generations to invoke the aid of a spirit bear. A circle about two feet in diameter, like the fireplace in a tipi, had been dug out of the sod, and here the votary deposited a pipe filled with tobacco, the bowl resting in the center of the cleared space and the stem pointing over the edge of the cliff, in this case, toward the east. Back of this circle the suppliant lay facing the pipe, fasting day after day until the bear came and accepted the proffered smoke. During his fast the young man went down every night to the timber along the river, where he slept, returning each morning to renew his solitary vigil.

To an Indian this is a matter of religion, and he takes his religion as seriously as we do ours, in some cases perhaps more so.

When I was hardly more than a boy I tattooed on my left forearm the Indian symbol for a buffalo's foot, and did not discover till years afterward that in so doing I had

committed sacrilege. The discovery was made one warm day when I had my sleeves rolled up. An old Omaha came along, stopped, eyed me sternly, pointed to my arm, and asked the meaning of the blue mark and why it was there. Of course he knew the meaning of it as well as I, for it was an Indian sign, but I told him it was a buffalo foot. "Yes," he said, "but why did you put it there?" "Just for fun," I replied. "Such things are not done for fun," said he gravely. "*That*," he added, thrusting out his left arm and placing a finger on the wild turkey track tattooed upon it, "*that* is not for fun."

A man who had been "helped" by a spirit bear, buffalo, turkey, or whatever animal, often wore a symbol of that animal—usually the foot—embroidered in beads or porcupine quills on his costume, or in some tribes tattooed on his arm, but no Indian would wear such a sign unless he had a right to it.

During his fast the youth is generally advised by some wise or holy man as to the nature of his dreams and their significance, for not all dreams are regarded as supernatural revelations. Most commonly such dreams are of minor importance, and sometimes the dreamer is disappointed altogether, but there is an occasional individual who is favored far above his fellows by the remarkable character of his visions. Such a man may be visited not only by the usual animal spirits, but even by *Wa-ki'-yan*, and may have conferred upon him the gift of prophecy or clairvoyance, success in war, or power to cure the sick. Then, if by a series of happy accidents, he seems to be able to foretell events, and is lucky in war, or if some of his patients recover, his reputation is made.

The drawing by His Fight (here reproduced) illustrates his experience after a fast of nine days. Making allowance for his inability to show in his naïve drawing what he claims to have seen, it gives a fair impression of one of these important visions. If the result of his best

efforts seems little short of infantile to us, we should remember that religious art of a much higher order seldom attains to the loftiness of our ideals.

In the center is the medicine man holding his pipe, a pipe thenceforth sacred. Sitting with him are a Cedar Spirit and a Pipestone Spirit, also holding the pipe. The spirit of the Pipestone came out of the water, for in that region the pipestone is quarried from under water in the beds of streams. From the clouds came *Wa-ki'-yan*, the Thunder God, who flashed the mirrors of his wings, and forth came a Dragon Fly and a Swallow. (*Wa-ki'-yan*, as here pictured, with horns surmounting an almost human head, is somewhat different from the usual conception, which is that of a large bird resembling the golden eagle.) A Coyote also came from the cloud. From other quarters came a Fox and two Hawks of different kinds. All these smoked his pipe with him and took him under their protection, telling him how and under what circumstances they would help him.

In general the Indian believes that disease is caused by a malign spirit, and the practice of most medicine men consists largely in the singing of medicine songs and the use of various noise-making contrivances—bells, whistles, rattles, and drums—to frighten and exorcise this spirit.

One may naturally ask, do these men actually believe in their supernatural power? My answer would be yes. I say this after observing their ceremonies, studying them behind the scenes, and conversing with them more or less confidentially, for, as I have said, the medicine man seems to regard the artist as a fellow craftsman. Yet the conclusion is unavoidable that some of them, and probably all, at times, are knowingly guilty of fraud, or, shall we not say, of deceiving the patient for his own good, just as the civilized doctor is occasionally accused of dispensing sugar pills. One experience of my own may or may not serve to illuminate this point.

His Fight and I were alone. He had been showing me his drawings and describing the creatures he had seen in his visions. Now the imagination of the wild Indian was limited to strange mixtures of the fauna of his own region—winged and horned men, horned bears or horses, mingled features of man and eagle, or of eagle and horse. His Fight knew nothing of the weird creatures of other climes and continents, while I had had the advantage of zoological gardens and museums where were gathered together animals from all parts of the world and of various geologic periods. Like most of the Sioux, he knew there were once, perhaps still were, strange beings inhabiting the badlands, where *Wa-ki'-yan*, the Thunder Bird, nests; that the greater part of them had been killed by *Wa-ki'-yan* ages ago, and that most of them, judging by their bones, were of giant size. Beyond that he did not know, the remains being so fragmentary it was impossible to guess what they looked like, but this very limitation of his knowledge made him eager to know more.

I was young then, and I had been taught that all medicine men were frauds, so to test his sincerity and have a little boyish fun I proceeded to draw a series of the most impossible beasts, combinations of wart hog, rhinoceros, giraffe, elephant, hippopotamus—possibly Uintatherium, though, on second thought, I believe the Uintatherium was not then known. While I was inventing these monstrosities, I told him I too was a medicine man and these were my spirit helpers. I rather expected he might take offense at my levity, for I believed I had made it plain I was joking, but sometimes, when men fear ridicule, they will voice their solemn convictions as if they are joking, and he may have thought this was so with me. To my consternation he seemed to take it quite seriously, examined the drawings with intense interest, and wished me to let him keep them, but fearing that would be carrying the joke too far I tore them up, much to his disappointment.

I do not know what he intended doing with them, but to tell the truth I felt rather ashamed of myself, much as if, by some crafty trick, I had tempted a medieval saint from the path of rectitude and basely lured him into self-betrayal.

Nevertheless, I still think His Fight was sincere. That he had as high a reputation and was as much respected in his profession as any man among the Standing Rock Sioux, I fully believe; that his fame as a healer may have extended somewhat beyond the Indians themselves may be guessed from the following episode.

Near the agency and fort there lived an old and highly respected Frenchman, but whether a *français de France* or Canada or of St. Louis I am not sure, though I think he was originally from St. Louis. He was a fine, intelligent, rather stately type of the French fur trader of other days, and had for many years been married to a Sioux woman. No newcomer on the upper Missouri, his name is to be found in the books of most of the distinguished travelers in that region, including Maximilien, which of course carries him back to the early thirties. The Indians called him *Cala'*, but I would caution the reader not to confuse him with another Frenchman who had borne the same name.

His Fight informed me one day that the wife of *Cala'* had been ill for some time—a fact I already knew—and that having tried the white agency doctor and the doctor from the fort, without benefit, she was now anxious to have him treat her case. Evidently the family wished to have the best medical talent available and were both willing and able to pay for it, although *Cala'*, he said, would not agree to give him a cow, which was the fee he asked for his services. I told him I thought, myself, that the fee was a little high, but he did not think so.

A day or two later he called and told me he had decided to take the case. His preparations were all made in my room, so I had an excellent opportunity to observe them;

in fact, I aided and abetted him to the extent of furnishing some of the accessories.

At his request I lent him a coyote skin which I happened to have, for it was the supernatural coyote of his visions which he intended to invoke in this ceremony. First he stitched the skin loosely together, then stuffed it with dry grass so that it bore some slight resemblance to the animal it was intended to represent. Then putting in the hollow of his left hand a pinch of vermilion (which I also furnished), he filled his mouth with water and moistened the dry color as needed by letting a little of the water drip from his mouth upon it. With this he painted the tip of the coyote's nose, each paw, and the tip of the tail, finishing by decorating his own face with dots of the same color till he looked as if he had broken out with the smallpox, then, hiding the coyote skin under his blanket, he went away.

In about an hour he was back with the announcement that he had done his best to effect a cure, but would not be able to tell for a few days whether he had succeeded or not. This statement disposed of another fallacy. I had read somewhere, or heard, that Indian medicine men claim to be infallible. Not so His Fight. Maybe he had taken a leaf from more enlightened practitioners and learned the wisdom of not claiming too much in advance. His treatment in this case had consisted in holding the coyote skin horizontally before the patient, its nose facing her, swaying it slowly from side to side to the accompaniment of a mystery chant, the medicine man moving his body to the same cadence with a slight dancing motion. If I remember rightly the sacred pipe also figured.

His Fight now drew forth from some hidden fold within his blanket a slip of paper and asked me what was written on it. It was an order on the Indian trader: "Pay to bearer two dollars in trade and charge to my account," and it was signed, but not with the signature *Cala'*, for *Cala'* was only his Indian name.



A Scalp for a Scalp

AS INDIAN wealth was reckoned in those days, the Crows, or Absaroke, as they called themselves, were prosperous; their large summer encampment on the "Little Horn" said as much.

Plenty of ponies were needed to move those commodious lodges with their thirty-foot poles, their back rests, wall curtains, and fittings; and plenty of ponies the Crows certainly had. Their lodges, mostly white and new, and not as often painted as those of some other tribes—though a few were tinted with pink earth—were nearly all tall, so tall that one might stand up in them without getting the smoke in his eyes, a thing to be said of few Indian habitations.

At night the combination of noise and social activities made sleep impossible, at least for me. Young men rode about, often two on one horse—young women also. Gamblers chanted incessantly, and youthful bucks stood in groups facing each other, singing at the top of their lusty lungs. Next to my tent, the walls rolled up to catch whatever breath of sultry air was stirring, a lovelorn boy stood for hours in the moonlight, moving only as the moon moved, so that his shadow might fall throughout the interminable night on the lodge where his inamorata slept—if she did sleep, which I very much doubt. Presumably, the

elders of the household, no more able to sleep than she, did not look favorably upon his suit. I judged he was one of those young fellows irresistible to the fair sex, but hopelessly ineligible from the viewpoint of maturer and supposedly wiser minds.

Be that as it may, about mid-forenoon of the following day I was summoned by loud, agonized cries of "*Mas-jí-de! Mas-jí-de!*"—[White man! White man!]*—*from two middle-aged squaws in the adjoining tipi. The young lady, to all appearance, was having an attack of the vapors—which did not seem strange considering the wretched night she must have passed—and the women for some reason felt the urgent need of my presence, though what I was expected to do in the circumstances I was at a loss to make out. Still, the mere fact of my being there seemed to reassure them, and they set to work vigorously to effect a cure. Bending over the prostrate girl, they pressed their hands and fists into her abdomen, beginning at the chest and working toward the stomach, with such force and determination that I really thought they would kill her. Why they did not I never could understand, for the strength of these women was prodigious, and in their alarm they were exerting it to the utmost. Yet that afternoon the patient seemed fully recovered, though she must have felt sore for days. I have heard it said, and I think it is true, that many of these people, both men and women, believe they have an animal of some sort in their stomachs, and if, in its efforts to get out, it ever rises into their throats it will strangle them. I suppose it was some such belief that had so alarmed these women.

Often, by day, from the big medicine lodge, center of religious rites, came the sound of large tambourin drums, their tin-disk attachments adding to their sullen booming a jingling treble which at a distance was not unpleasing, though near by it was earsplitting.

Big men and celebrities were there, but, with the ex-

ception of Deaf Bull, who had instigated the Sword Bearer outbreak, they were all "good" Indians and therefore were not so widely, I might almost say favorably, known as the "hostile" chiefs of the Sioux. Plenty Coups was camped near the western horn of the "circle." Nearer the middle were Curley and his brother, White Swan. Curley, egregiously puffed up as sole survivor of Custer's command, had escaped from the battle of the Little Horn without a scratch. On the contrary, White Swan, who on that occasion was with Reno, was crippled and palsied with wounds, apologetically humble as befitted one who had been marked for death—as the Indians seemed to think—but unaccountably had survived and still encumbered the earth rather unwillingly, sadly aware of his disabilities.

Here and there were fine costumes, women wearing buckskin dresses with beaded shoulders, men in splendid beaded shirts with ermine fringe. On the back pole of Curley's lodge hung a superb headdress of buffalo skin and horns, with a trailing strip of scarlet list cloth behind, on which fluttered, in three horizontal rows, black and white tail feathers of the golden eagle. Deaf Bull had a tunic of antelope or mountain sheepskin, embroidered with broad strips of porcupine quill work over the shoulders and down the arms. The fringe was of scalp locks, or black horsehair which had the same significance, and his leggings were similarly decorated, but, as I recall, with beads instead of quills. On the breast and back of the shirt were large circles of quill work, while a few locks of horsehair dyed pink, interspersed among the scalp-lock fringes, probably stood for horses captured in war.

The Wet, a prominent chief, wore an ermine-fringed, beaded shirt, a very fine one, which had a small scalp about the size of a silver dollar tied on each shoulder. They were rather genteel scalps with a pretty beaded piping around the edge of each, and the flesh side decently covered with

a piece of muslin painted red. I asked if he would sell his shirt; the answer, short and crisp, was, "Five ponies."

With the Sioux, as well as the Crows, I have found "five ponies" a kind of set valuation for anything they do not wish to part with, and in this case I took it that The Wet did not wish to sell his shirt, and so had put a prohibitive price on it. It was the scalps on the shoulders which made it so precious in his eyes I supposed, but to my surprise I found him quite ready to sell them, and at a very moderate figure. Thus it came to pass that I got the scalps and the story of how they were taken, but, coming to me through a third person—for The Wet did not volunteer any information—this account later was found to be faulty in one or two particulars.

Years afterward, by sheer good luck, I made the discovery that Russell White Bear, the agency interpreter, was thoroughly familiar with all the details of the affair, his mother having been a sister of The Wet; in fact, his father's lodge stood next to that of The Wet at the time the scalp was taken, for the two scalps were originally one, the division having been made for decorative purposes. This discovery also makes it possible to tell both sides of the story, the Sioux and Crows in the interim having met on terms of peace and exchanged friendly confidences concerning their war expeditions against each other.

In the winter, or spring, of 1880—one man made it 1883, but he was probably wrong—a war party of Sioux set out to capture horses from the Crows. The government was trying, without much success, to prevent these enterprises, and the few white men then in that region regarded them with utter disfavor, but the Indians clung tenaciously to their old method of wiping out intertribal grudges, secretly, in their own way. They prided themselves on their ability to steal through the country without being observed, and their small war parties could haunt

this unpeopled waste without attracting much, if any, attention. Just as the white man considered himself "smarter" than the Indian, the Indian regarded the white man as far below him in wilderness craft.

The plan of the Sioux included the possible taking of scalps if favorable opportunity offered, but scalps were not primarily what they were after, nor, if they could avoid it, did they expect to do any fighting by daylight, so there would be no need of formal war dress; their everyday clothes, "working clothes," so to speak, would be more appropriate and serviceable, for they were traveling light and afoot.

No expedition of the sort was ever undertaken without enlisting supernatural help. The leader had gone through the usual meditation and prayer, fasting perhaps, and sacrifice, and had sought the advice of some holy man regarding taboos to be observed and the necessary procedure to avert disaster and insure success. In addition, of course, the indispensable war pipe, the smoking of which was in itself a sacred rite, had been provided.

The days of extreme dry cold were past, those days of creaking, tinkling snow under the moccasin, of sun dogs glowing like burnished silver through the frost-crystaled air, and toward the beginning of *Ic-ta' wi-tca'-zan* moon [the moon of sore eyes, or snow blindness—our month of March] the sun grew stronger at midday. Then came a moist, dragging wind from the west, cutting and thawing the snow before them as they walked, till by nightfall the ground was bare save for a few shrunken drifts in the lee of the crested buttes.

Skirting through the foothills of the Big Horn Mountains, they came at length to the valley through which the Stillwater flows toward its confluence with the Yellowstone. Here the Crows were encamped, had been in fact for most of the winter, for in these mountain valleys the short white sage offered their ponies a fair substitute during

the colder months for the grass which, now that the spring rains had set in, was beginning to show green again among the tufts of greasewood and rabbit brush.

Yes, those spring rains were fast changing the face of the country from a somber grayish-brown to a barely perceptible green. They were doing more; they softened the ground so that the moccasins of the Sioux would have been soaked and ruined by the clinging mud had they not gone barefoot in the slush to save their footgear. That was nothing—they were accustomed to it—but there was another aspect of the situation which gave them no little worry.

From their hiding place back in the hills they had reconnoitered the Crow camp as well as could be done at that distance. Some spying at closer range was desirable, but with the earth so soft, their tracks would surely betray them. They must wait till it was drier, but even in this there was danger. It would be bad enough if they succeeded in getting horses; even then, though they could move faster, their trail could be followed the more easily, and they might be overtaken before they could clear the hundreds of miles which lay between them and safety. Yet the longer they lurked in the heart of the enemy's country, the greater the chance of their being discovered.

The food problem, also, was one which would soon have to be considered, for men must eat. Far down the slopes an occasional flicker of white told of the presence of antelope. There were, too, in the hills, a few deer, poor and ragged-looking at this season, for they had not yet picked up from the short rations of their winter quarters on the low wind-swept ridges, and their faded winter coat was just beginning to shed, but poor as they were their meat would have helped, had it been safe to fire a shot. If all had gone well, the party by now would have been properly mounted and far on their return, probably beyond danger of pursuit. But the tracking was still too easy,

and their packets of pounded dry meat would soon be gone.

During this period of anxiety and forced inaction the partisan's pipe was often in use. Councils of the fifteen were frequent, and the leader sought for some dream or omen to guide his decisions. At last it came. In spite of the seemingly unfavorable conditions, the supernatural ones, the spirit helpers, had given the sign; it was time to strike.

That night, as soon as it was dark, three scouts were detached from the main body, thus early because, while it would not be safe to commence active operations before midnight, time would be needed to cover the intervening distance between their hiding place and the Absaroke village.

The three Sioux stopped five bow shots, it may have been, from the nearest lodges, sat down, consulted together, and agreed that one of them should go to the right of the camp, near the river, another to the left, and the third to the center.

The raiders had no reason to suppose their presence in the neighborhood was suspected, but there was always the possibility that some Crow rider in the hills had come on their sign, or that the magic of the Crow medicine men had betrayed them. At any rate, whether the suspicion was based on something of this sort or only on gossip or the probabilities, the Absaroke did suspect and were on their guard. One in particular, the chief called The Wet, whose lodge stood nearest the river, had been on the alert for several nights, and on this night especially he had a presentiment that something unusual and important to him was going to happen. Indians have such notions and are guided by them. Strange to say, sometimes, as in this case, their premonitions came true; at least, so they assert, and I, for one, cannot prove the contrary. This man was so impressed that he told his brother, Bird Head, and they determined to watch closely that night.



Photo by D. F. Barry.

The Crow scout, "Curley." Only survivor of Custer's immediate command on the Little Big Horn, June 25, 1876.



DeCost Smith, 1890.
from photo
by Leslie Smith
1890

The Wet. Drawing by DeCost Smith, from photograph by Leslie Smith
taken in Crow camp on Little Big Horn, 1890.

Though prepared for any emergency, The Wet felt, quite naturally, that the most likely event of importance to him would be that an enemy might try to steal his horses. Of these he had a number in a brush corral back of his tipi, and, as on recent nights, he had fastened his war horse near the door of his lodge slightly to the right as one entered. Arranging a peephole at the door, he made his bed just inside, and, rifle at hand, lay down to await whatever fate might decree.

It was a soft, slightly hazy, peaceful spring night, quiet, serene. The voice of a distant coyote now and then, or the hoot of the great horned owl in the narrow-leaf cottonwoods down the river, only served to emphasize the silent calm. The brother, Bird Head, grew drowsy; he would sleep awhile; he could be wakened if needed.

Time passed. A dog near the corral growled softly, then, it seemed, ran a few paces, barking; then growled, then barked again. The watcher could see nothing but the sleeping lodges of his neighbors and the dark form of his own war pony silhouetted against the sky; as for the slight commotion among the dogs, that was a common occurrence, probably an expression of resentment at the trespassing of other dogs from the far end of the village. On the whole the night was passing uneventfully, and slowly, he thought, but how slowly he could not judge, for, from his peephole in the door flap, he could neither see the group of stars the Sioux call *Wi-tca'-ki yu-ha'-pi*, "They have a litter" [the Great Bear], nor note its changes. He was not sleepy exactly—when one has a premonition one does not nod at one's post; premonitions are not to be treated so lightly—but he may have dozed a little, when gradually he became conscious of the sound of moving hoofs, only a slight movement of hoofs, horse's hoofs—his own horse—there at the doorway!

Fully awake now, fully alive to the situation, with his eye at the peephole, he felt for his rifle and raised it

noiselessly to be ready. Outside a tall form had just cut the lariat, made a half hitch around the horse's jaw, and was starting to lead it away. Quickly, with soft, swift tread The Wet stepped over the threshold, and with the muzzle of his gun almost touching his enemy's back, fired. The horse started at the flash; the man fell. Instantly The Wet shouted his coup cry: "I, The Wet, have just killed an enemy. I am first to strike." Bird Head then struck the dead man, and, finding his gun at the same time, announced in a loud voice his claim of second to strike an enemy, and first to capture an enemy's gun.

The scalp was removed with a few sweeps of the knife. Men came running from all directions, eager to be third and fourth to touch the body; after that there would be no special distinction in striking it; anyone who could break through the excited crowd might do so. Mothers hurrying with their boy babies in arms would pick up the nearest stick or twig of sagebrush, thrust it in their chubby fists, and by word and gesture urge them to strike their fallen foe. Safe to say, before the sun would climb half his course to the zenith, the crowd would tire of ill treating the bedraggled mass which so lately was an athletic young Dakota ambitious to steal the horses of the Crows. Such are the fortunes of war; if there were no risks there would be no glory.

But let us return to the moment when the report of The Wet's rifle broke the silence. The Sioux scout who had gone to the middle of the village heard the shot and the coup cry, and knew that his companion near the river had been killed. The sudden alarm and the rush of Crow horsemen made escape from the village at that moment impossible, but a slight depression in the earth in which grew a few tufts of rosinweed offered itself near by. No one would think of trying to hide in such scanty cover—unless it might be a Sioux marauder in dire peril—and not even the crafty Absaroke, well versed as they were in the

wiles of their enemies, would in their first excitement dream of looking for him there. Into this he threw himself, flat on the ground.

Around him, past him, almost over him—but without seeing him—swept the cavalcade, through, out, and beyond the village.

As soon as he deemed it safe to do so the Sioux stole out of camp. At daybreak, running steadily down the Stillwater—from the first he had not broken his trotting gait—he found himself following in the trail of the Crow horsemen who had picked up the tracks of his companions and were pushing them vigorously. As long as they kept up their interest in the chase and did not turn back, he had little to fear from them, for even at the rate he was going, watching the ground to avoid rocks, washouts, and prickly pears—for he must not let his feet be disabled—he could still keep a good lookout ahead, and would probably see them before they could see him.

But this could not go on indefinitely. Afoot, alone, and hopelessly outdistanced, with mounted enemies between him and his friends, what chance had he of rejoining them? Why continue longer in their direction when every stride was bringing him into greater danger? Plainly, his safety lay in striking out a course of his own, one his foes would least expect, trusting to luck that his lone track would escape their notice.

Scarcely had he come to this decision when the heavy trail he was following turned east and left the valley. It was the parting of the ways; from now on he must keep his northerly course alone down the Stillwater, cross the Yellowstone, swing over to the bend of the Musselshell, and then—having shaken off his enemies, as he hoped—double back toward his own country. Meanwhile, in the Crow camp, day had dawned. Nothing had been heard from the party which had left hurriedly during the night in pursuit of the thieves, and, to tell the truth, not much

was expected of them. Many shrewd and determined men had not joined in the first eruption, and these now took council together. A second party was formed, better organized and equipped than the first, and a competent leader chosen. Now, by the light of day, the tracks could be worked out systematically, and in a long chase a few hours devoted to preparation would enhance rather than decrease the chances of final success.

At a good round lope, the trail of the night before was easily followed to the point where the Sioux war party and their pursuers had turned to the east. Here, by good fortune—or bad—sharp eyes detected a single track leading off to the north, not toward the Sioux country at all, unless one excepted the small bands of Yanktonais, neighbors of the Watopana Assinniboin, near Fort Peck. The Piegans, it is true, also lived in that quarter, but farther west, and, while they were not above raiding the Crows, they surely would not be joining forces with the Sioux, who were also their enemies. Undoubtedly in this instance the raiders were Sioux, for the dead man in the camp was beyond peradventure of that tribe. So this was a wily Sioux trick to fool the stupid Absaroke. In that case, Friend Dakota, we shall see who is the fool!

The warm winds were fast drying the prairie soil, but for a day or two more the tracking would be fairly good. Not even a Sioux, traveling as fast as he, could hope to hide his tracks, and, besides, there was the possibility that he did not know the country. On their ponies they might even catch him in some exposed place where they could run him down.

The Yellowstone was bank full from the melting snow and spring rains. Near the shore, in a sparse grove of timber, the fugitive had quartered the ground in search of a few pieces of dry log to make a raft on which to ferry his gun and clothes. Here and there he had pried dead cottonwoods of small size from their beds in the rotting

leaves and carried them to the waterside, where, as the deep tracks in the mud showed, he had tied them loosely together and consigned them with their cargo to the swift-flowing river, he swimming and pushing behind to the farther shore.

No attempt had been made to stem the current, as the Crows found after swimming their ponies over, the spot where they emerged being but a few yards above that where the Sioux had left the river after dressing himself and pushing his rude raft back into the stream.

At nightfall, after quitting the valley of the Yellowstone and making their way well back into the rolling hills to the north, the Crows were still far behind. True, the tracking in places had been slow, but, even so, it was evident this Sioux horse thief had good legs.

Sits Spotted, then a youth of seventeen, was a member of the Crow party. From his recollections, as well as the account given later by the Sioux who was the object of their pursuit, it is possible to construct an accurate and fairly detailed story of this typical, if minor, incident of Indian warfare. Coming directly from original sources, it tells us more of Indian methods and mental processes than many a volume of generalities.

Now, some of the Crows began to have doubts as to the success of the enterprise; it was necessary to reassure them. The leader consulted the medicine man, who agreed that it would be well to appeal to the spirits for information and guidance. At his direction the young men constructed a wickiup—willow wands, their butts stuck in the ground, their tips laced together, forming a framework, domelike and slightly oval—over which they spread their blankets and robes. Entering the mysterious cabinet thus formed, the conjurer sang his magic songs and talked for a long time with his supernatural advisers in language so incoherent or archaic that those outside could make little of it. At last he emerged, very tired, seemingly, from

his mystic conference, but after smoking the sacred pipe, and after a few moments of silent thought, he began interpreting the message he had received.

The Sioux, he said, was camped for the night by a tree, at a certain point which he described, near landmarks with which most of the party were familiar, and for food he had deer meat. By moving directly across country, ignoring his tracks altogether, and traveling for the rest of the night, they would gain rapidly in time and distance, and should, by morning, reach this point and stand a good chance of finding their quarry. On the strength of this prediction, horses were mounted and the march continued.

Early in the morning they came to the place the medicine man had described, and as they approached it, he pointed to a large tree some distance ahead, and said, "That is the tree I saw last night." Arrived at its foot, they found where the Sioux had slept, the remains of a small fire, still warm, and lying near it part of a deer carcass freshly killed. Their enemy had eaten his morning meal, extinguished his fire, and departed early. The Crows also had need of refreshment. There was enough venison for all, and after a good breakfast and a short rest the trail was resumed.

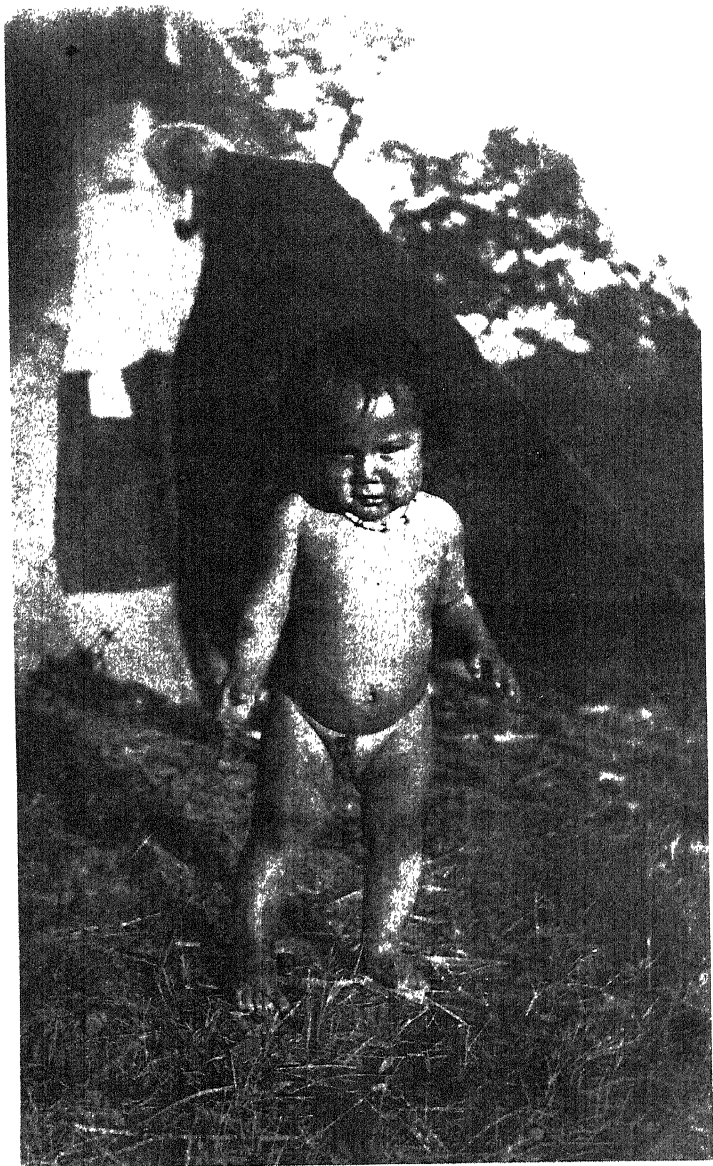
Over the divide it led them, toward the Musselshell, where they arrived at evening. They had ridden in two days and part of a night a hundred of the white man's miles, in spite of the halts and slowing down necessary at times to puzzle out the trail, but in the same length of time, or less, the man on foot, with his life at stake, had done more, for here on the banks of the Musselshell, where they settled down for the night, his tracks still beckoned northward into the dusk.

Next day a close scrutiny of the ground showed that the fugitive was keeping to his steady trot most of the time, and from this it was thought he must have seen the party in pursuit. As the chase led close to timbered bends,



Photo, Richard Throssel, Billings, Mont., 1908.

Crow camp on Little Big Horn.



Small Crow boy. Lodge Grass, Montana, Oct., 1890.

or past thickets of willow and wild rose, the Crows became impressed with the thought that at any time now this enemy might fire on them from ambush. His tireless jog trot, no matter how rapid, was not the gait of one fleeing in panic; it was rather the calculated pace of a man whose mind was cool and clear; if ever they brought him to a halt he would be dangerous. Not for nothing had his people been called *Nadouessieux*— [Serpents]; his pursuers could plainly see that when they came upon him, as they surely must before very long, they would not find him running; he would be coiled like a rattlesnake, and he would strike as quickly.

Why he left the river bottom at this point and took to the hills, the Crows could only guess. He himself has since told us he did not know he was being followed; in fact, he had begun to think himself beyond danger of pursuit, but to make sure, he had gone to a commanding ridge top, from which, like a wary old buck deer, he could watch his back track. Far up the river valley he saw the approaching horsemen, at first mere specks in the distance, gradually assuming the form of men on horseback, and—yes, there could be no mistake about it now—they were ferreting out his trail. Well, so be it. He had hoped they would not find it, but having found it, with the earth soft enough to show an imprint, he could not prevent their following it. More than that, they must soon overtake him, and it would be the height of bad management to let them find him unprepared.

He had already given some thought to his surroundings, and another look over his shoulder at the grassy amphitheater behind him showed its saucerlike sides sloping gently and evenly from the encircling rim of hills, to a small washout in the center, where water from melting snows and summer cloudbursts had begun to erode the surface. He would examine that.

One appraising glance assured him the place was well

suited to his purpose; here he would make his fight. The gully was but a few yards long, its walls abrupt at their upper edge, and at its deepest point a man could easily remain concealed from any angle of the surrounding ground, throughout the whole expanse of which there was no cover sufficient to conceal an enemy, though a low growth of sage near the rim of his fortress would enable him to peer out without exposing himself to view.

The Crows were not long in reaching the hilltop lookout from which he had seen their approach. They halted. Here the ground showed evidence that the Sioux had rested, lain down; his purpose was obvious. Toward the south the valley of the Musselshell was spread out in full view before them, and down it, as they trailed him, he had watched their coming. From here his tracks, now fresher than they had seemed before, led out across a grassy, bowl-like valley which the hunted man must have crossed quickly, for he was nowhere in sight. But what is that slight cleft in the earth at its lowest point, there, where a few tufts of sagebrush, encouraged by the moisture from the heights, have taken root? A washout to be sure, and, truth to tell, a rather small one, not unlike hundreds of others they had passed unnoticed, but the tracks of the Sioux pointed directly towards it, and this one, under the circumstances, took on a significance that was lacking in all the rest.

The leader of the Crows designated certain men—good trackers—to circle the washout at a safe distance and see if any tracks led from it. None did; the only tracks visible were those leading to it. Shots were sent in from different directions to draw the enemy's fire and tempt him to waste his ammunition, or at least betray his position, but to no avail; there were no answering shots. The crashing of the Crow rifles, echoing harshly from hill to hill, shattered the peaceful calm of the beautiful spring morning like a very sacrilege in a sacred spot. A magpie, his long tail streaming

straight behind him, flew across toward the trees bordering the river. The bright sunshine, even at the distance at which the Crows had posted themselves, picked out every detail of light and shade, every twig of sagebrush, yes, every blade of grass around the silent, innocent-looking washout. All nature smiled; the world was at peace—all but its human inhabitants. Between Sioux and Crows it was never peace.

The washout held its secret well, but no one doubted the Sioux was there.

A Crow warrior, eager to prove his invulnerability and courage—though it might be supposed that one who is invulnerable would have little need of courage—volunteered to dislodge the ambushed Sioux, and after the requisite prayers to his spirit guardians for protection, and the customary benedictions, he mounted his war horse and rode at top speed straight at the shallow gully. Within a few yards of it he flung himself from his pony's back, and, gun in hand, started to run forward, when he was seen to whirl sharply and fall on his face. On the instant a puff of smoke had enveloped a clump of sagebrush on the edge of the washout—a second's interval—the "thud" of a rifle smote the ears of the expectant Crows. It had been a costly experiment, this testing of a warrior's "medicine," but it had settled one question at least; the Sioux was posted behind that growth of sage, and for the rest of the day the Crows concentrated their fire upon it, not knowing till years afterward that their enemy, immediately on delivering his shot, had changed his position to a point several yards away, from which, without firing a shot, he had watched their movements till darkness fell.

Darkness—that was something which added another difficulty to the problem. It was during darkness that the Sioux habitually escaped from such traps as this, and some of the besiegers secretly wished this man would escape; he had proved himself altogether too dangerous. The death

of their companion had shown them that their medicine was weak, the supernatural powers had not helped them, and this had dampened their ardor. Of course by this time the Sioux might be dead, hit by one of the many balls that had been sent after him, but that could not conveniently be determined until daylight. In any event, they must keep at least a perfunctory watch during the night, stationing guards around the washout ostensibly to prevent his getting away. For this purpose a sentinel on the north and the main party to the south were deemed sufficient.

Next morning it could be seen, even at three hundred paces, that the body of the dead Crow had in some way been disturbed. The medicine pipe was brought forth, and a solemn council ensued. One of the party volunteered to go forward to investigate.

The washout was deserted, as free from human occupancy as the hundreds of others which seamed the face of the prairie. Were it not for some prints in the earth, and the dead Crow, now scalpless, lying near its rim, it was as though no Sioux had ever been near it.

To the Eastern Chippewa the magic of the Menominees was so potent that they left no tracks on their warpaths. The medicine of this phantom Sioux, though strong, was not equal to this, for here were tracks leading off to the southward, in the direction one would least expect, towards the group of watchers on the hill, and past them; here he had crouched, there he had crept stealthily, and here again, at last, resuming his dogtrot, he had struck out for the wide purple distance—and freedom.

The first law of primal man, who makes no quibble of extenuation or degrees of guilt, was satisfied—a life for a life, a scalp for a scalp.



Deaf Bull, Crow chief, instigator of the Sword Bearer outbreak. From portrait sketch by author, made in Deaf Bull's lodge on the Little Big Horn, 1890.



Two scalps from a Sioux horse thief killed by The Wet, a Crow chief, about 1880, and a war pipe formerly used on raiding expeditions by His Fight, a Sioux partisan.



Lone-Hand Warfare

AS FAR back as a hundred years ago our government was vainly trying to guard a line a thousand miles long to prevent unauthorized whites from entering Indian lands. Naturally the effort was futile. Trappers, hunters, traders, adventurers, and fugitives from justice evaded the regulations, and once beyond the frontier were a law unto themselves, for there was no one to restrain or protect, and some needed restraint far more than protection.

In this great land of freedom every man's right to do as he pleased was limited only by the equally valid right of others to do the same. True, the fur companies, far in the wilderness, governed their territories to a certain extent and in accordance with their own interests, but in so wide a domain even they could not reach everywhere.

If ever there was a country where all men were equal it was here, where everyone depended on his own resources, and on his own rifle. Here was no royal game reserved for princes, no distinction of birth, education, or ethical standards. All God's creatures were his to destroy at his discretion—beaver, elk, buffalo, mountain sheep, even man, if he wished and thought prudent. As a result, homicide in certain forms was looked upon as natural and excusable, at times necessary and highly commendable. The wonder is not that there were so many killings, but so few. As a

matter of fact, the old West at its worst was never so bad as some persons believe. The adventurous man was not necessarily a brute nor a killer; in the great majority of cases he was quite the reverse.

The Indian, of course, was the traditional enemy, actual or potential. The fact that he might be of a friendly tribe helped him little, for people professed in all honesty their inability to tell the difference between friendly and hostile Indians, and the man who could make the distinction was regarded with suspicion, as "a friend of the Indian," or worse yet, "a renegade white." Popular opinion was decidedly in agreement with the old refrain, sung to "patting" and fiddle accompaniment around the emigrant campfires:

The Injuns will catch you while crossing the plains.
They'll kill you, and scalp you, and beat out your brains.
Uncle Sam ought to throw them all over the fence,
So there'll be no Red Injuns a hundred years hence.

I am not now referring to the openly avowed active hostility of wartime, but to the smoldering antipathy, the mutual distrust in times of peace. Fortunately this feeling did not always manifest itself in overt acts. Men of the two races roamed over the same region. Sometimes they caught glimpses of each other in wild places where a surreptitious shot might easily snuff out a life and the world at large be little the wiser, yet even when military escorts were considered necessary for parties of distinguished sportsmen, surveyors, or others, seasoned trappers, hunters, and prospectors of the wilderness would often take their chances alone or in small parties, and more often than not, with good management, they were none the worse for their temerity.

I remember one unexpected meeting which must have been as great a surprise to the Indian as it was to me. That day I wanted an antelope. As far as was known there were

no Indians in the region at the time, though, from the uneasy actions of the game, I suspected their presence.

In appearance the slightly sloping surface of the bar or bench land seemed unbroken for miles, though in reality it was furrowed by draws twenty to fifty feet deep, invisible till one stood on their very brink. From the edge of one of these I saw a dozen or more pronghorns walking over a rocky ridge. It was farther than I cared to shoot, much farther than an Indian would have hazarded, but the line moved slowly, and finally I was tempted to try a shot at the big buck trailing behind, which I did, and dropped him.

On the instant a mounted Indian, evidently not in the best of humor, burst out of a draw a few yards from me, rode past at full speed, then down the hollow and up the steep side of the ridge over which the antelope had disappeared, the coarse, sharp slide rock slipping and clattering down at every upward jump of his horse, his quirt arm working like a flail as he forced his mount up the slope in a vain effort to keep in sight of the fleeing herd.

I really regretted spoiling this man's hunting. Most of all I felt sorry for the horse whose legs were being mangled by the sharp rocks. A few weeks later I found the animal dead, its legs so lacerated that the tendons were exposed. An Indian is not deliberately cruel to his horse, but he will ride in impossible country, and if his pony is used up in the process he will abandon it to recover or die. From some strange motive of humanity, superstition, or indifference he seems averse to killing a disabled horse.

The defeat of Custer on the Little Horn afforded many a Sioux boy the chance to kill a white man, a wounded one perhaps, but a white man none the less, and for several years after Sitting Bull's surrender there were young fellows who would greet you pleasantly with the statement that they had killed a white man, and if they caught you far enough out on the prairie they would kill you. In many

cases this was idle boasting, but there was always a possible grain of truth in it.

White men have been known to "take a shot at an Indian" (in time of peace, let me repeat), and frequently Indians have repaid the compliment. My sole experience was in 1884, three miles below Fort Yates, and the shot came from the edge of Sitting Bull's camp. My brother was with me at the time. We heard the shot and the whine of the ball, and caught a glimpse of the head of the Indian. Not having had much experience at that time, we were inclined to think it a joke, though when an Indian takes to shooting at white men, even in fun, he is showing a dangerous tendency. The distance was too far for most Indians to shoot with any certainty of hitting, but I have killed antelope and deer at greater distances, and missed them at less.

When a white man shot at an Indian it was because of his hatred of the race in general—in fact, pure malice. An Indian might shoot a white man for the same reason, but in his case the motive was sometimes complicated by a vague thought of sacrifice or religious mysticism.

With tribes where torture was a feature of the sun dance, young men offered themselves to fast and pray in behalf of the people, to be hung up by ropes toggled through the skin of their breast or backs, gazing endlessly at the sun and blowing through whistles made of eagles' wing bones, till the skin tore away and they were released. But since the government had put a stop to this, and to the other safety valve of reckless youth, the warpath, how was a young man to gain merit?

Then came the humiliation of trying to follow the white man's road, the cooping up on reservations from which they were not allowed to wander, the killing off of the buffalo, and the many grievances for which they thought the white man was to blame. To these new conditions the older people often yielded more readily than

the young. The young man sometimes became morose; "his heart was poor," despondent. He groped for supernatural aid, and at times became desperate and dangerous. Suicide was not a favorite method of ending his miseries (women were more addicted to that), but to die fighting bravely against the traditional oppressor was glorious. What better way than to kill the first white man who crossed one's path, without provocation except the very general one that his race was responsible for all the Indian's troubles! The certainty, where there was such certainty, that the killer must pay the penalty with his own life seems to have been an incentive rather than a deterrent in some cases. These tragedies were not common, but they occurred every few years among the Sioux and Cheyennes, and usually they ran remarkably true to type.

For example, in 1902, I was for a time among the Brulé Sioux of Rosebud, South Dakota. As I had known these Indians eighteen years before, I was asked by several of the newercomers at the agency if I thought them dangerous. A young surveyor whose work took him to out-of-the-way places, had special reason for his misgivings on this point. At first I answered, "No," but on second thought qualified this by adding that there was always a remote chance that some individual Indian might feel the irresistible urge to kill a white man, and that under such conditions any white man would do. As such acts were rare the danger was practically negligible, and as they could not be foreseen and prevented the matter was hardly worth worrying about. "That," said the young surveyor, "is just what Louis Bordeaux told me when I asked him." Louis Bordeaux's family, as traders, had known these people for generations. I had been out forty and fifty miles from the agency, riding about, sometimes alone, sometimes with Indians, and had never given the matter a thought, though I knew there was more bitterness against the government than there had been for years.

If my memory is correct three employees of that agency were shot by Indians during the next eight months.

The autumn of 1890 was a season of great uneasiness among most of the Western tribes. White men in the Indian country were officially warned to use uncommon care in their dealings with them. The Ghost Dance excitement was spreading; the Indians were awaiting a messiah. At this time, when almost any act of violence might be expected, an incident occurred which had most of the characteristics of this type of fanaticism, and in addition furnished an excellent illustration of the bond of friendship which often existed between two young braves, causing one to share the other's fortunes to the death.

To state the case briefly, a Cheyenne Indian had killed a white man. It was early September. Deming, my brother Leslie, and I were camped with Deaf Bull's band of Crows on the Little Big Horn about thirty miles above the agency, and forty from the scene of the killing. The news, as it came to us through the Indians, did not assign any tangible motive, though to our Crow neighbors the fact that a Cheyenne had killed a white man needed no explanation, and apparently it gave them a pleasurable thrill, notwithstanding the fact that the white man being their traditional friend, and the Cheyenne their hereditary foe, they should, one might suppose, have boiled with indignation. However, they did seem to think that we would take the matter to heart, and jovially suggested that we organize a secret war party against the common enemy, in which they kindly offered to join.

The Crows had always boasted that they had never spilled white man's blood, yet a few years before this, our present host, Deaf Bull, had maintained that the government treated the hostile tribes better than it did the Crows, which possibly was true, and the only way to secure proper consideration for themselves was to kill a few white men. The result of this preaching was the short-lived Sword

Bearer outbreak, in which that leader was killed, and for which Deaf Bull, as a military prisoner, had to atone by working for a period as roustabout on the New Orleans levee. Perhaps the outcome which would have pleased him most would have been the spectacle of Cheyennes and whites at each others' throats, with his own people, the Absaroke, as amused bystanders.

From details gathered from the Indians, and from Walter Shirlaw who witnessed the final act of the drama, supplemented by Lieutenant Robertson's account, and information furnished by Milton L. Whiteman, Chief of Indian Police, and Interpreter, Tongue River Agency, this is what happened.

The Northern Cheyennes, for it is with them the story has to do, were located in the Rosebud-Tongue River region adjoining the Crows on the east; Lane Deer was their agency. They had always been warlike, but had not always been hostile to the government. On the contrary, they had been friendly in the beginning, and with better management might have remained so. In 1866 they had refused to join Red Cloud in his campaign against the fortifying of the Bozeman Road, and the Sioux in resentment had struck them with their unstrung bows, the most calculated insult they could devise. Even so, their neutrality was distrusted by the whites, and a party of them peaceably encamped below Fort Phil Kearny at a point suggested and approved by the commandant escaped midnight massacre at the hands of the soldiers only through the timely discovery of the plot by Colonel Carrington.

Our pitiful failure to hold the Bozeman Road convinced the Cheyennes that their only safety lay in an alliance with the Sioux, that their interests, in fact, were identical, and in the following decade Cheyennes and Sioux made common cause against us, by which we were to learn that Indian fighting was really a serious business.

When, in January, 1879, about one hundred and fifty

men, women, and children of Dull Knife's band, prisoners at Camp Robinson, refused to be sent back to Indian territory and threatened to resist to the death all efforts to force them, it was thought they might be starved and frozen into submission. For five days they were deprived of food, water, and fuel. Anyone who has experienced the winters of that region knows what this meant—but did it shake their determination? Not in the least.

Of such stuff were the Northern Cheyennes—enough of the common human clay to be plastic under a strong and judicious hand, but far too much of grit and iron to be bent or slapped into shape by brute force. With all the zest for life of other robust men, they seemed absolutely fearless of death when occasion required.

Last of their people to give up their independence, they were now trying to do their best to adjust themselves to the new conditions, but there were many causes of friction. Owing to errors in maps and other ambiguities, disputes had arisen over reservation boundaries, and squatters and homesteaders were located on Indian lands, their cattle ranging everywhere, with the government too apathetic to put them off.

The buffalo were gone, killed by the heavy long-range rifles of white hide hunters; skins were ripped off by mule team and sold for two dollars to make inferior leather; however it is true that there were a few old bulls scattered widely in the Big Dry country to the north, but they were far away, hard to find, and when found almost inedible. Besides, the Indians were not allowed to leave the reservation, lest in the absence of nobler game they might be tempted to kill the white man's "spotted buffalo." The government's biweekly issue of beef soon tainted in warm weather, and generally gave out altogether before the end of the two weeks, or was then to be had, if at all, only in the form of sun-dried slabs somewhat harder than oak, and about as tough as cottonwood.

This was the state of affairs in August, 1890, when a chief named American Horse expressed a desire for fresh meat. This man was a Cheyenne, not the Sioux chief, second of that name, whose father was killed at Slim Buttes in 1876.* As he was a man of influence, there were many young men in the camp who sought his favor, the more so because of his three good-looking daughters upon whom they gazed longingly. Among these admirers was a youth named Chief In Head.

Now it goes without saying that the daughters of American Horse would not be held cheaply; patriarchal peoples guard their desirable young girls closely, and particularly was this true of the Cheyennes. Normally match-making was a matter of bargaining between the older heads of the family, so that the young man often had to steal the girl he loved and who loved him, or suffer the despair of seeing her go to an older, richer, or more influential suitor. A young buck thus thwarted was sometimes exceedingly gloomy, and a gloomy Indian was not infrequently vengeful and dangerous when crossed, a trait, by the way, which is not confined to Indians.

Possibly for some such reason, or for reasons which do not appear, Chief In Head had for days been taciturn and low in spirit. Everyone had noticed it, but if he revealed the cause at all it probably was only to his closest friend, Humped Over, an amiable boy younger than himself, even-tempered, and of an entirely different disposition.

These two started out to get meat, presumably to gratify the wish of American Horse, and they succeeded in their quest. Although the Indians seem inclined to draw a discreet veil over the kind of meat they secured, we may assume, I think, that it was neither deer, antelope, nor elk. However that may be, while returning with their ponies loaded the two Cheyennes saw in the distance "a

* American (*i. e.* White Man's) Horse was not an uncommon name; examples could be cited from the Sioux, Cheyenne, Blackfoot, and probably other tribes.

figure riding toward them. Humped Over guessed it might be a white man. "If it is a white man," said Chief In Head, "I shall kill him." Humped Over argued against such a rash proceeding, but nevertheless continued to ride forward by the side of his surly companion.

The meeting was not a friendly one. The white man—for so he proved to be—Hugh Boyle, young nephew of a homesteader named Gaffney living near the reservation line, happened to be looking for his uncle's milch cows and, seeing the fresh meat, charged the two Cheyennes with killing one of them.

Humped Over had been to the mission school and understood English. Chief In Head needed no knowledge of English to tell that the young white man was angry. True to his threat, and before his friend could stop him, he shot Boyle from his horse, and as he lay on the ground sent another bullet through his head.

Upon Boyle's failure to return home the whites in the neighborhood became suspicious and nervous even though there were three troops of cavalry camped near the agency, who had been there for the past five months, for this was not the first white man killed that season.

An investigation was started. Searching through the hills at some distance from where Boyle was killed, a party of soldiers found a place where the earth had been disturbed. Further scrutiny revealed the body of Boyle. Clods and dirt had been kicked and clawed over it in an effort to hide it, but by whom was not made clear till one of the searchers espied, lying near, one of those tin jingles Indians wear on the tongues of their moccasins. Usually the tin is bent around a tuft of dyed horsehair cut square like a mucilage brush, and as the edge of the tin sooner or later cuts through the buckskin thong to which it is attached they are forever coming off. Purely ornamental at best, this one, at least, served the useful purpose of clinching the guilt on the Indians.

The truth now, was not long in coming out, but by this time Chief In Head had taken to the Wolf Mountains and was in hiding. The soldiers became threatening; the murderers must be surrendered.

The Cheyennes did not want war; the young men had acted foolishly, as young men will, and while in their heart of hearts their friends no doubt admired them for it they could not openly approve their conduct. In accordance with their time-honored custom they offered ponies and other property to placate the relatives of the deceased and appease the anger of the agent. With difficulty they were made to understand that no such settlement was possible, and were told flatly that the young men must come in and stand trial, or—the affair had now reached the crowning point of *opéra bouffe* absurdity—the whole tribe would be put under arrest and marched off to Fort Keogh! With their habitual notion of vicarious atonement, this did not strike them as in any way illogical; in fact, they believed it.

The Cheyenne camp, meanwhile, had been concentrated about the agency in order that it might be better watched. Negotiations continued. The two youths were known to be in, or about, the camp almost constantly, but it was certain that an attempt to capture them by surprise would result in a tribal war, and this neither side desired.

The father of Humped Over pleaded that his son did not kill the white man, had in fact tried to prevent the killing, but he was told that both boys must submit to trial by white man's law, and if one were found to be innocent that one would not be punished. "Yes, but the guilty one?" The Indians knew about hanging; they did not like it; in that way a dog might be prepared for the kettle, but it was no death for a warrior to die. Yet the white man, wrong-headed as ever, seemed set on this form of vengeance, and evidently his patience was at last

exhausted, for this was his ultimatum, "If the young men refuse to come in, the soldiers will be sent at once to get them," and the Indians knew he meant it.

The father of Humped Over went sadly away to deliver the final message, but those familiar with Cheyenne psychology knew that neither would these two boys surrender meekly nor would the innocent one try to evade the penalty meted out to his guilty companion.

The agency people waited. For a time there was no sign, but at last, borne faintly on the breeze came the sound of lamentation from the Indian village. The die was cast. Soon the grief-stricken father returned. "The young men will not come in," he said, "but tomorrow at noon they will be at that point on the hills; then the soldiers can come and get them." The message also carried this added bit of irony—if the soldiers would not fight, the boys would ride into the agency and exterminate the white population.

In the camp that night there was thumping of drums like a locomotive puffing up a steep grade; the Cheyennes were dancing; the young men should not go to their death with the wailing of women in their ears. On the contrary, they were to die gloriously, mounted on the best horses, with the finest arms and the richest costumes pious friends and relatives could supply. Since the Great Father had done away with the sun dance, these youths, painted, anointed, bearing the prayers of the people, should go forth a sacrifice in full sight of the noonday sun, to prove to a decadent world—and to their own kith and kin, lest they forget after ten years of peace—how a Cheyenne should fight, and, if need be, die.

This dressing for death was no unusual thing. When an Indian had a presentiment that he was to die in battle, his preparation for the event did not consist merely in the customary stripping and painting; he dressed in his best as if for some gala occasion. Especially was this so now, and, that these striplings should be fittingly garbed and

painted, no one was more solicitous than their own mothers.

On the day appointed some of the officers were frankly skeptical. It did not seem likely that two boys would try conclusions with three troops of cavalry, with agency police and employees thrown in for good measure, making the odds about a hundred to one against them, but the Cheyenne elders smilingly assured them they need have no fear on that score, and one of the chiefs even rode with the advance troop to point out the best place to await the attack.

This, in pragmatic Montana, in 1890, was like a faint far echo of those chivalrous days when Crusader and Saracen, or French and Spanish buccaneer, for the moment not engaged in spraying each other with square bullets and molten lead, jousted and banqueted together with utmost good will and courtesy. It was the Cheyenne idea, but the officers from Fort Keogh accepted it in similar spirit.

At the approach of noon the cavalry took the field. Because they did not know the extent the trouble might assume, a small detachment was left to protect the agency. The rest advanced toward the chosen battleground, like the grand entry to a bull fight or tournament, but soberly, without fanfare of trumpets; at the most a terse, shrill bugle call, or a word of caution or command. To these cavalrymen it was a strange business, as if they had been called to furnish a stage setting, a mob of supernumeraries against whom two boys, the real heroes of the piece, were to show their bravery and play the spectacular roles. It was the object of the military to put an end to the demonstration as soon as possible, to prevent needless bloodshed, but there was danger enough in it to satisfy reasonable demands. Before the work was over the troopers would find cause to admire the courage of their opponents, and to feel for one of them a sympathy as real as it was unexpected.

a dry washout, where he hid himself. It was not prudent to approach too near. Though the range was fairly long he was doing some execution, had scored a horse or two and a soldier (wounded, but not killed), when at last it was noticed that no more shots were coming from the washout. That meant that the young Cheyenne was dead, disabled, out of ammunition, or possibly that he was husbanding his last few cartridges. In any case the sun was getting low in the west, and, whatever the cost, the work must be finished. Here we cannot do better than to quote from Lieutenant S. C. Robertson's account in *Harper's Weekly*, of October 18, 1890:

This last was a mere youth, who, it afterward transpired, had taken no part in the killing of Boyle, but who was too brave to claim exemption from the crime his guilty companion had committed. Crawling through the brush toward him, we suddenly discovered him dead, and we were almost startled at the weird beauty of the picture he made as he lay in his vivid color of costume and painted face, his red blood dyeing the yellow of the autumn leaves on which he fell.

Certainly that day more than one young trooper learned to respect, if he could not understand, a type of barbaric heroism in which, when all is said and done, lies the germ of what we call patriotism.

Walter Shirlaw, the artist, was at Lane Deer Agency at the time and made a genuine, "our-artist-on-the-spot" illustration for Lieutenant Robertson's article in *Harper's*. I had talked with Shirlaw a few weeks earlier at Crow Agency. He was not then greatly impressed with the Indian as a subject for the painter, but after the affair at Lane Deer, which took place in full view of the agency, as if staged for his special benefit, he was willing to concede that the dramatic element was not entirely lacking.

Maybe Deaf Bull (pronounced *Deef Bull*, emphasis on the "deef") was right after all. Maybe it was the killing of Boyle and another white man earlier in the season, coupled with the Lane Deer fight, that compelled official

notice of the very real grievance of these Indians. At any rate, eight years later, the government, through Inspector General James McLaughlin, the "Iron Worker" of the Sioux, one time agent at Standing Rock, bought out the claims of the white trespassers and restored to the Northern Cheyennes the lands which were rightfully theirs.



MacDonald, the Mail Carrier

MOST people assumed without giving it a thought that the young mail carrier, MacDonald, was a white man, but there were a few who insisted that he was a light-complexioned Scotch "breed" who had drifted into the upper Missouri country from the north. Not that this mattered in the least; the one thing that mattered in that isolated region was his ability to get the mail through. His Indian ancestry, if any, would, however, account for his evident fondness for the spectacular as reflected in the style and cut of the buckskin coat he wore the day he left Fort Stevenson with the biweekly mail for Fort Totten.

It was a coat of light antelope skin, with a collar of otter, and a strip of the same down the front. The thongs of the fringes were caught together in pairs, and wound at their base with dyed porcupine quills, pink and green combining with the natural white of the quills to form rectangular figures at regular intervals in most pleasing effect. Across the back, between the shoulders, longer fringes similarly ornamented and twisted together for a part of their length, flopped rhythmically with the motion of his horse as he and his companion loped away toward the "Dog Dens," and the breaks of the Coteau des Prairies. Such a coat might have been made by some bright-eyed mixed-blood girl, for its seams were sewn with thread,

and more delicately than the over-and-over sinew stitching of the primitive tribes. To wear such a gala garment on so dangerous a mission might well have been considered a challenge, and those waving fringes a special invitation, if any were needed, for the Sioux who infested the Totten road to send a bullet through his back.

MacDonald never reached Fort Totten, nor did he return to Stevenson.

General Terry's official report to the Secretary of War, 1868-69, simply mentions the fact that "On the 15th of May two mail carriers were murdered by Uncpapas between Forts Stevenson and Totten." In dealing with such commonplace happenings official reports were never profuse in details. A mail carrier killed by Indians was merely another mail carrier gone; his name was of no importance. The rest of the story must be patched together from recollections of old frontiersmen and army officers, Indian pictographs, and the mute evidence of a mutilated buckskin coat. There were in my time, and no doubt there still are, Indians of my acquaintance who could supply the missing data if they would, but in all probability they never will.

The abandonment of Forts Reno, Phil Kearney, and C. F. Smith, in 1868, after humiliating defeats at the hands of the Sioux, very naturally encouraged these Indians to extend their operations against other military posts, and Fort Buford, on the Missouri near the mouth of the Yellowstone, thus became an object of their special attention. The forts to the east and west of it also suffered, and communication between them soon grew to be difficult and dangerous.

Nothing, apparently, had been learned from the lesson of Fort Phil Kearney. The government was apathetic; the forts were poorly supplied, and the men "too few for active service in case of an emergency requiring them to take the field," and emergencies of the sort there were in plenty.

"Parties of infantry called suddenly from fatigue duty and hastily mounted for the purpose" were constantly being sent out to overtake, if they could, Indians who were running off the beef herd or other stock, and who might have a start of five or ten miles. Needless to say, the pursuers "usually failed of their object." Hardly a load of hay or wood could be brought to the fort without inviting attack, and men engaged in the necessary work outside were being killed every few days, up, down, and across the river in all directions.

The situation was all the more exasperating because the Indians seemed to regard it as a kind of military tournament in which they could engage with almost no risk to themselves, having very soon demonstrated the powerlessness of the garrison to chastise them.

The mail route from the East ran through Fort Abercrombie on the Red River of the North to Fort Totten on Devils Lake, from there to Fort Stevenson on the Missouri, and thence up the river to Fort Buford. Mail carriers were far from safe on any part of this road west of Red River, but the stretch between Totten and Stevenson had the reputation of being the most dangerous of all, and that between Stevenson and Buford was not much better. Large parties of soldiers could travel in the daytime and generally get through, but such details of men could not often be spared for this work, so that frequently the mail would be carried by civilians, singly or in pairs—frontiersmen, self-reliant and familiar with the country and the wiles of Indians, who would often cover the distance by night, and if need be leave the customary trail and feel their way through the trackless wilds. In winter they faced great hardship, but winter or summer they won a reputation for courage and furnished some of the most heroic characters in frontier history.

The Uncpapas, who generally ranged on the tributaries of the Yellowstone and streams west of the Missouri,

sometimes crossed to the east of that river and prowled over the Coteau des Prairies and through the region of lakes south of the bend of Mouse River, through which the mail route lay, and here they were often joined by the unreconciled Sissetons, who, since the Minnesota massacre, had frequented the neighborhood of Turtle Mountain near the British line. It would be hard to say which of these groups surpassed the other in animosity toward the whites though it would seem the Uncpapa committed the greater number of brilliantly hostile acts. Their leading spirit, according to General Hancock's report, was Sitting Bull, a young chief who was just beginning to be known as a successful partisan.

In the winter of 1868-69, Sitting Bull, wishing to obtain proper credit for the many harrowing outrages from which Fort Buford had suffered, sent a book of drawings by himself, depicting his feats of arms, as a present to Brevet Brigadier General H. A. Morrow, commandant at the post. It was just such a book as was kept by many successful war leaders, a pictographic record of the coups and war exploits of his entire band, which by custom were credited to the chief.

These records, also, were often painted on buffalo robes, and chiefs covetous of fame had long known the advantage of the publicity to be gained by presenting their blazoned robes to distinguished white travelers, especially those intending to write books. This became a veritable habit with the Mandan chief, *Mato Topa* [Four Bears] who gave one such robe to Catlin in 1832, another (slightly expurgated as a result of Catlin's criticism) to Maximilien, Prince of Wied, in 1833, while a third, probably in some previous year, came into possession of J. S. G. Schoch, of Bern, Switzerland, who deposited it with the rest of his collection in the Historical Museum of that city. In an article by David I. Bushnell, Jr.,* this last-

* Bushnell, David I. Jr., "Ethnographical Material from North America in Swiss Collections," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. X, No. 1.

mentioned robe is described and figured in Plate 1, under the title "Crow Buffalo Robe. Presented to the Historical Museum, Bern, Switzerland, in 1838." However, comparison of the exploits pictured on the *Mato Topa* robes figured by Catlin and Maximilien with those on this robe in Bern proves that it also is a *Mato Topa* robe, and consequently Mandan, not Crow.

Most of Maximilien's collection was lost in the burning of the steamboat which was bringing it down the Missouri. Fortunately, his *Mato Topa* robe was not on the steamboat; he had taken it with him, probably as bedding, on his early-April down-river trip by Mackinaw boat, and he tells us that it reached Europe safely. Of its present whereabouts, if it still exists after these hundred years, I know nothing. The Catlin robe, after being exhibited in Europe, was consumed in a fire in Philadelphia. So far as we know, then, the artist *Mato Topa* is represented today by only one of his works, and that wrongly labeled.

While he may have painted others, I know of but two such robes blazoned by Sitting Bull. One of these he sent to Rome as a present to the Pope, a princely gesture quite in keeping with the man's lifelong policy of self-advertising, a policy to which he owed no small part of his fame. His other robe was owned, some years ago, by a lady in Brooklyn, his old friend, Mrs. Weldon.

But Sitting Bull was wiser in his generation than *Mato Topa*, in that he signed most of his pictures (in pictograph) so that while they endure he is likely to receive credit for them. His gift to the commandant at Fort Buford was no doubt intended, in a spirit not uncommon in medieval chivalry, as both compliment and challenge, but it failed somewhat of its effect through the unchivalrous conduct of the Sioux soldier-chief to whom it had been intrusted for delivery to General Morrow. That emissary got no further than the post-trader's store, where he bartered the pictures for sugar and coffee. The post trader

gave the book to Dr. Kimball, surgeon of the fort, who sent it to the U. S. Army Medical Museum and Library, in Washington, but before doing so he had two exact tracings made from it by Corporal Marston, one for General Morrow, and one for General (the Brevet Lieutenant Colonel) Robert Nugent.

About ten years later General Nugent loaned me his copy of these pictures, so that I had an excellent opportunity to study them in detail. One of the drawings particularly interested me. It was the one here reproduced, which is from a tracing furnished through the courtesy of Col. Alfred A. Woodhull, Assistant Surgeon General, from the original in the Army Medical Museum. Two features which made a lasting impression on my memory were the stovepipe hat of the white man, and an unusual detail of his buckskin coat—the horizontal fringe between the shoulders—and the bullet entering his back below this fringe. I also had the advantage of looking over these drawings with General Nugent and hearing his explanation of them while the events depicted were fresh in his mind. Naturally when the drawings first arrived at the fort they aroused much interest, and the frontiersman in the buckskin coat was recognized by those familiar with the circumstances as the mail carrier MacDonald, killed in 1868.

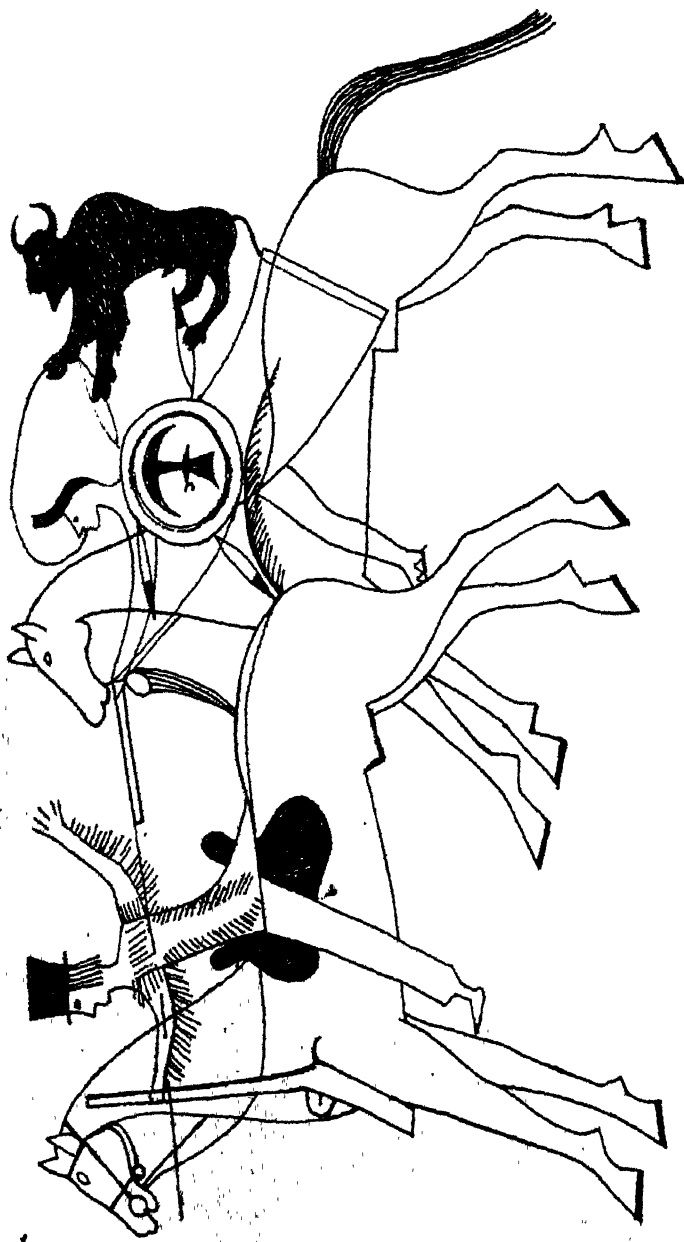
The drawing here shown has been published in many books and newspapers, but so far as I know its true story has never before appeared in print.

When MacDonald and his partner failed to arrive at Totten, a detail of men was sent back on the trail to see what had detained them. They found the scalped and mutilated body of MacDonald's companion, but it is said that no trace of MacDonald was ever found, save some pieces of a buckskin coat, partly burned and blood stained, lying near the ashes of a small fire.

As years rolled by the events of that earlier day were



Coat of MacDonald, the mail carrier. The small hole in the back was caused by the accidental scalding of the buckskin while washing the coat. The oval patch covering the bullet hole is just to the left of this.



Death of MacDonald, the mail carrier, from a drawing by Sitting Bull.

forgotten, except by the old-timers along the upper river. They, to edify the newcomers, or as pastime for themselves, delighted in recalling the tragic or grotesque happenings of the years before. They shook with honest laughter as they described the absurd appearance of the soldier near Fort Buford, who got an arrow through both cheeks, the blade on one side, the feathers on the other, though the newcomers saw in it little cause for levity. They told of Luther—"Yellowstone" Kelly, who escaped the common fate of mail carriers by killing the two Sioux who sought to do him in. Then, too, there was the story of Low Dog burning up the woodcutters near the mouth of Musselshell, and of course they never failed to recount the fate of MacDonald, supposedly killed by Indians, but whose body, for some unexplained reason, was never found.

Thereupon grew up a legend, "The MacDonald Mystery." "Why did they never find his body? For the excellent reason," said some, "that MacDonald was still alive." "Murdered by Uncpapas" had been the official verdict, but these wiseheads knew better. They insisted that the man who accompanied MacDonald that day was no mail carrier, but in reality a miner returning from the placers of Bannock and Alder Gulch, going back East with a fortune in gold dust secreted in his clothes. Was it not possible, then, that MacDonald had murdered and robbed him, leaving the charred remains of his own buckskin coat to throw the blame on the Uncpapas? As bearing out this sinister suspicion, it was reported that a discharged soldier who had formerly known MacDonald, had, some years after his disappearance, caught a glimpse of a young fellow who greatly resembled him hurrying through the crowded railroad station at St. Paul.

But those who pretended to believe this, or repeated it in good faith, had not seen one important piece of evidence—the mail carrier's bullet-riddled coat.

I have already mentioned Low Dog. Among those who disliked Indians, and in those days there were many, Low Dog was regarded as the superlative example of the bad Indian; *bad*, of course, from the white man's viewpoint. Rain in the Face probably ranked second, with the jovial Long Dog, or Sitting Bull, a rather poor third. The reason for this, I think, was to be found in the name, "Low Dog," and the atrocities attributed to him, rightly or wrongly; but most of all, his photograph. Where the man kept himself I do not know; I never saw him but once, but, already familiar with his photograph, I recognized him at a glance. His eyes differed from and seemed more ferocious than any human eyes I ever saw; I should have known him among thousands.

It was one day at Standing Rock, late in February, 1885. I was told there were two Indians outside the mess-house door; they wished to speak with me, but would not come into my workroom, and would not give their names. This was unusual, for the Indians seemed to know they were welcome, and my room was often crowded with them. One proved to be a tall man with whom I had previously had some dealing, but whose name I never learned. I remembered him chiefly as a man who, though never positively discourteous, had shown plainly by his manner that he had little love for white men. The other I saw at once was *Cun'-ka ku'-tci-ye-la* [Low Dog], principal actor, according to report, in many deeds of villainy.

Throughout the conversation which ensued, Low Dog never uttered a sound nor changed a muscle of his face; the taller man did all the talking. Said he, "This man has a buckskin coat to sell. Will you look at it?" Low Dog took the coat from inside his blanket and handed it to me. Unfolding it, I noticed at once the horizontal fringe between the shoulders, and an oval patch in the back just below it, which instantly brought to my mind Sitting Bull's draw-

ing of the death of a mail carrier wearing a similar coat, shot through the back at precisely the spot where this coat was patched. Pointing to the patch, I asked, "What is this?" No reply; the masklike faces betrayed no sign.

One thing puzzled me. If Sitting Bull killed this mail carrier, as his drawing showed, how came the coat in Low Dog's possession? I did not know then that the leader counted to his credit the exploits of all the members of his band, and of course Low Dog was a follower of Sitting Bull.

"What is your friend's name?" I asked of the spokesman. "*Cu-pe' ska'* [White Guts]," said he. "No, Friend," I replied, "I do not think so." "Yes," said the taller man, "that is his name." But seeing that I still doubted, he added, "He has two names." I asked for the other name, but there was no answer.

It was evident that both men were becoming uneasy under my questioning, so deciding to secure the coat first, and ask questions afterward, I closed the bargain, and the Indians left at once.

I soon found that the agency people had but the haziest recollection of the MacDonald case, and, stranger yet, they seemed to know nothing of Low Dog except that he had a reputation as a "bad Indian," and most of them believed he was dead.

The coat evidently had been washed, cleaned with white earth, and dusted with pale yellow chrome, but at that time showed no blood stains. Gradually I forgot my first suspicion. After all, thought I, why should I suppose this to be the coat of the Sitting Bull drawing? There were probably many buckskin coats of a like pattern (I have since learned that it is practically unique), and a patch might not necessarily mean a bullet hole, or if it did, you must first kill your animal before you can make buckskin of its hide.

During the next twelve years the history of this gar-

ment was about what might be expected of such a piece of costume among an artist's belongings. It was loaned to a fellow student to wear at a fancy-dress ball in Paris (no doubt it had figured in dances of a far different kind), and in New York it was worn on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera House. From time to time it was borrowed by painters and sculptors who introduced it in their mural decorations and statues; and, naturally, I have used it in a number of my own pictures and illustrations. In short it has traveled widely, and in its own proper buckskin, or in marble, bronze, paint, or printer's ink it has been seen by thousands. How little the original owner, looking down now, perhaps, from the fine skies over Dog Den, foresaw all this on that spring day in 1868, when he started out from Stevenson with the Totten mail.

At last, through age and occasional attacks by moths, the otter-fur border with which the coat was originally trimmed, became unsightly. Its removal revealed unmistakable bloodstains which up to that time it had hidden, and a minute examination, made possible by the fact that most of the white earth and chrome by this time was dusted off, disclosed the following facts.

The coat had been washed, as shown by the stretching of the needle holes in the seams.

The water used in the washing had been warmed over a fire, as indicated by one or two spots where the buckskin had been scalded by coming in contact with the bottom of the pan or kettle, and efforts to soften these inelastic areas while drying had resulted in breaking small holes in them.

There was a small ovoid patch in the back of the coat, below the transverse fringe. This was where the ball had entered.

A larger patch, approximately square, in front, showed where the ball had gone out. A large patch extended nearly around the left sleeve.



Cun'-ka Ku'-tei-ye-la, Low Dog, alias Cu-pe' Ska', White Guts.

With the exception of the wristband the entire right sleeve, and much of its fringe, was new.

The sewing of the patches and all new portions of the coat had been done with an entirely different type of stitch from that used in the making of the coat.

Neither the patches nor the new sleeve showed any trace of blood, but the buckskin of the original coat, especially below the patch in front, was plainly blood-stained. The left pocket had bloody finger marks inside and out. The stains are somewhat the color of iron rust, which is characteristic of old bloodstains.

My first suspicions being verified, it only remained to get the Indian side of the story; but from whom? Sitting Bull was unquestionably dead; Low Dog had long been dead, according to general belief, yet after his supposed demise, I had with my own eyes seen him in the flesh. Might he not be still alive?

I began a search for Low Dog. At first I thought I should be successful, but it is not easy to find an Indian who does not wish to be found. No sooner was my object suspected than I was met by all sorts of obstacles and confusing reports. First, there were several Indians of that name. I produced a photograph of the man I wanted; it was recognized at once. Oh, yes, that was Low Dog, the celebrated warrior, but he was thought to be living with the Ogallala of Pine Ridge, or some other band hundreds of miles away. Anyway, it would be useless to inquire further, as he never was involved in any such affair. "But," said one Indian after reflection, and as if thinking aloud, "I can't see how he came to let you have that coat."

Blue Haired Horse, a Brulé of Rosebud, being farther away, could afford to be more frank. His wife, he said, was related to Low Dog, and he knew the coat well, having seen it many times. "They are lying to you," said he. "They are afraid."

Finding me still insistent, his friends and tribesmen

came to the unanimous conclusion that the particular Low Dog I was trying to find was dead. Major McLaughlin, who had once known these Indians better than any other white man, was of the same opinion. There seemed no longer any reasonable doubt on the subject; Low Dog was dead.

The last time I mentioned his name to any of his own people was some years after Low Dog, by all these accounts, was no longer on this earth, though, truth to tell, I still had my doubts. I was on my way to Idaho, and the train had made the usual stop at Mandan. A Yanktonais named Yellow Bull was on the platform. After a few casual remarks I asked if he knew Low Dog. He answered without hesitation, "Yes." Making sure he understood to which Low Dog it was that I referred, I said, "He is dead, isn't he?" "No," replied Yellow Bull, ignorant of the reason for my question, "he is alive."



Sitting Bull

In his war paint and his beads,
Like a bison among the reeds,
In ambush the Sitting Bull
Lay with three thousand braves.

—Longfellow

OF COURSE there was no ambush on the Little Big Horn the June afternoon that Custer met defeat; the camp of Sitting Bull and his three thousand braves, horses, lodges, women, and children, spread over an open valley, could be seen for miles. Nor is it true that Sitting Bull himself was *ambusqué* (to use the World War slang), though for years thereafter an unfriendly officialdom, alternately torn between a mercenary desire to exploit and the need of discrediting him, tried hard to make the world believe he had been "skulking in the hills" while his people did the fighting.

At the time, it was assumed that there must have been an ambush of some kind, and Sitting Bull was given entire credit for it. The newspapers asserted boldly that Custer had been "outgeneraled." The thought was not flattering to national pride, especially in that centennial year when we were beginning to feel and assert our importance. "Outgeneraled!" cried the nation. "How could one of our ablest cavalry leaders be outgeneraled by a savage?" There

was need of explanation; fortunately it was not long delayed. A day or two later the papers had it that this Sitting Bull, the supposed savage, had light hair and blue eyes, that he was in fact half-French, had been educated in a college in lower Canada, and spoke French and English fluently. "Ah!" the nation heaved a sigh of relief. "That explained it."

All this was pure invention; Sitting Bull was neither more nor less than a full-blood Uncpapa Sioux, and proud of it. He would have been the last to feel complimented by the suggestion that he had white blood in his veins. As for French, I soon found he didn't know a word of it, while his English seemed limited to "*Seeda Boo*, you bet," "Hello," and "*How ma'-tci*." The fact that this last had two meanings, "How much?" and "How! Match" (the latter, of course, being a request for a light), caused him embarrassment at times, but nevertheless he seemed proud of his English.

Already we have numerous descriptions of the man, by those who knew him and frankly disliked him, and those who knew him only to admire, but as history is not yet done with him, we shall no doubt some day have them from those who never saw him. With this thought in mind it is hoped that a short sketch by one who knew him, but had neither reason to like nor dislike him, may have its value.

Ta-tan'-ka Yo'-tan-ki [Sitting Bull] was somewhat above middle height, thickset, but not corpulent. Some thought him bowlegged. He did appear slightly so, but probably his stocky build, rather wide hips, and flapping leggings would account for that. His features were fairly good, but heavy. His face, except when animated by surprise or pleasure, was rather dull, yet not in the least unkindly. Assuredly there was firmness, yes, and obstinacy in it, but little hint of the treachery with which his enemies charged him.

Some wise man once made the foolish statement that the camera cannot lie. This may be true in a general sense, but there are exceptions; in several instances the camera has most libelously misrepresented Sitting Bull. Focused too near, and with tricky lighting, it has exaggerated his nose and given his eyes a baleful, diabolical glint which in reality they did not have. These pictures, naturally, were just what the public wanted, and sold faster than those of milder expression. It is mostly through them that he is known today.

I first met him in Martin & William's trading store at Standing Rock. Many times since then I have seen him, dressed—as befitted a prominent chief—as poorly as any of his humblest followers, but on this occasion he wore a list-cloth blanket and leggings, beaded moccasins, and a wide, light-colored hat, all clean and obviously new. I had already recognized him from his photographs (every log cabin in the Territory had a photograph of him), and Louis Primeau, the clerk and interpreter, saw that I was studying him closely. "Do you know who that is?" he asked. (It was this same Louis Primeau who, six years later, guided the cavalry to Oak Creek the morning Sitting Bull was killed.) "Yes," said I, "it's Sitting Bull." At the sound of his name the blanketed figure turned toward me enraptured, grasping and shaking my hand, exclaiming: "*Seeda Boo*, you bet! *Seeda Boo*, you bet!"

From this I learned that it was one of his greatest joys to be "introduced." He was so eager to make a good impression on those he met that it puzzled and grieved him if a white man showed no desire to shake his hand. Up to a very short time before his death, when he was thought to hate all white men, he still showed evidence of this. It may have been self-conceit, but in his way I think Sitting Bull was a lover of humanity.

I had a good example of this one raw March day, fifty miles from the agency, when I met a party of Indians

straggling down the country, wrapped in their robes and blankets. They were about three hundred yards away when one of them left the rest and came loping his horse toward the wagon in which I rode. Recognizing him as Sitting Bull, I announced the fact to my driver. He, a new arrival from the settlements, had never seen that celebrity, but having heard the usual stories about him, was plainly worried until I introduced Sitting Bull. Then the cordial handclasp and hearty "*Seeda Boo*, you bet!" instantly dispelled his fears.

The chief was returning from a long visit to his friends at Fort Peck and was anxious to hear the news from Standing Rock, particularly as to his old crony, Long Dog, who was thought to be at the point of death, but who, in spite of age and a hand paralyzed by wounds, managed to keep going, jolly as ever, in the end outliving Sitting Bull. Strange to say, these Indians, coming from a point two hundred and fifty miles away, and still a long distance from the agency, knew what was going on there nearly as well as I who had just left it.

Sitting Bull seldom let slip a chance to belittle the white man's innovations; at the same time he was quick to take advantage of such civilized inventions as served his purpose. No man knew better than he the superiority of modern firearms, and I never saw anyone who could focus a telescope more quickly, yet when the telephone was installed between Fort Yates and Mandan he asserted that it was only to fool the Indians and make them believe that the agent could talk over the wire with persons at a distance, as he often made a semblance of doing, but it was all a hoax. Whether Sitting Bull believed this or not, the thought of the dignified Major McLaughlin going through such hocus-pocus was well calculated to tickle the Indian sense of humor.

One day, shortly after, I happened to be in the agency office when the Major appeared in the doorway pushing

the doubter before him, and saying to Clark, the head clerk, "Here is Sitting Bull. He doesn't believe we can talk over the telephone. Call up Mrs. Parkin, and let him talk to her." Mrs. Parkin, a mixed-blood, spoke Sioux fluently, and Sitting Bull knew her well. She was living at Cannonball River, twenty-five miles away.

Naturally, in the estimation of a primitive man, if this strange boxlike contrivance into which he was invited to talk was not a hoax, then it must be *Wa-kan'*, supernatural. His manner showed that he fully realized this possibility. As he caught the first strange sounds his face was a study, as he recognized them as intelligible speech he called excitedly, "Hello, hello," and "You bet, you bet," evidently not comprehending that the instrument could understand anything but English. He soon found that it spoke his own language, and after he had asked to whom he was talking, and where she was, his incredulity, if ever he had any, was gone.

This incident was a good illustration of the man's mental process. He did not hate individual white men, and if he pretended to sneer at the white man's inventions it was because he feared the white man's domination, and wanted to show his contempt for officialdom. Where he could steal the white man's thunder, his rifles, field glasses, matches, even his religion, and turn them against him, he was eager to do so. An Indian utopia without the white man, but with the white man's modern improvements, was Sitting Bull's ideal.

As to making believe, himself, I am not sure he was entirely above it. I remember finding him one day face down in the grass before his lodge, ostensibly dozing, or possibly simulating some kind of mystic daydreaming. I felt sure he had seen me coming, but he did not deign to stir himself until he had kept me waiting for some time. It was on this occasion that I first noticed his willingness to capitalize his reputation among the whites, for after I

had bought his long-fringed, beaded buckskin shirt (more because it was a characteristic piece of Sioux costume than because it belonged to him) he urged me to buy his highly ornamented pipe pouch also, explaining that I could show it to white people and say, "This was Sitting Bull's pipe pouch," and white people would be very glad to see it. But there was a lack of originality in this, for every returning Western traveler in those days brought back a Sitting Bull's pipe pouch, and most of them were no doubt genuine for the old fellow sold a good many, but always seemed able to produce another at short notice.

Although vaguely known to the men of the frontier for a decade before Custer's defeat, it was not till the news of that disaster swept the country that the name of Sitting Bull became familiar to the general public, and even then for some years it was little more than a name. It would seem that the Canadian authorities, to avoid giving offense to a friendly nation, took care that no photographs should be made of him while he was a refugee in British territory, or if any were taken they did not, so far as I know, bear his name, but were labeled simply, "Sioux Chief." Of course, after his return to our side of the line, official efforts to minimize his influence continued.

However, in 1884, after his surrender, his two years' detention at Fort Randall and his final return to Standing Rock, he was allowed to make a contract with Palmquist & Jurgens, photographers of St. Paul, giving them exclusive right to sell his photographs, in view of which agreement, and as long as it lasted, he scrupulously refused to let anyone else make any sort of picture of him, and in the same year he was taken on a kind of triumphal tour of Canada and the Eastern states. In New York, where he was exhibited for an admission fee of fifty cents at the old Eden Musée, it was noticed that a white woman, who apparently had followed him from Canada, was often in the audience. He was much gratified by the crowds that



Photo courtesy Notman, Montreal.

Sitting Bull, the famous war chief. Note the "episcopal ring" on left hand.



Cun'-ka Han'ska, Long Dog.

came to see him, listened sympathetically to his eloquence in justification of himself and his people, and bought his autographed photos, all of which increased his self-esteem and made him more unmanageable later on.

In fact, only a few weeks after his return to Standing Rock he brought upon himself some incisive remarks from George Faribault, whose part-Indian ancestry gave him a perfect understanding of the Dakota language and psychology. He had native wit and a good education. I often wondered if he did not speak their language better than the Indians themselves.

Now, owing to the jealousy of rivals, an Indian chief often lived in fear of assassination, and in Sitting Bull's case there was the added danger, not entirely imaginary, that a deluded white man might try to kill him to avenge Custer. This fear had even made him hesitate at first to trust himself to the mercies of the people of the East.

Faribault was an important member of the agency staff, and the occasion referred to was an issue of goods. Sitting Bull insisted on standing in a narrow passageway where his bulky presence obstructed the work. This had been explained to him, and he had been asked several times to stand aside, but with characteristic determination he continued amicably to supervise the work as he thought fit.

At last Faribault said to him, "You are a great man?" "Yes," admitted Sitting Bull. "You killed Long Hair (General Custer)?" "Yes." "You traveled through the East, and many white people paid half a dollar to see the man who killed Long Hair?" "Yes." "Did you ever think that someday, if you are not careful, those same white people will be paying half a dollar to see the man who killed Sitting Bull?"

This set him thinking, but it could not long restrain a man of his temperament, and he continued to defy the government, in spirit at least, to his dying breath. As it

turned out, the glory of killing Sitting Bull had to be shared by two men, and one of these did not live to be exhibited.

The victor of the Little Big Horn always professed to be unable to understand why he should be blamed for Custer's death. It is true he had predicted the battle and foretold the result, but his people had violated no treaty and were not the aggressors. They had been attacked on their own lands and had defended themselves; that was all. His was the attitude of the man who knows he is right, and is grieved because his foes persist in denying it.

When, in the late sixties, rumors began to drift into the forts and trading posts that somewhere far in the region between the Belle Fourche and the Yellowstone a new leader of the Sioux had arisen, people noted the name—a new one to them—but few asked who he was or whence he came. They accepted him from the start as a sort of spontaneous product of the soil of that wild land, sprung quickly into brilliant, and probably ephemeral, bloom. None recognized in him the round-faced boy known as *Qo-ka' Psi'-ca* [Jumping Badger], who used to play with his whip tops of buffalo horn, and his throwing sticks before the gates of the stockade. For that matter there were so many Indian boys, and their names changed so constantly, it was hard to recall a particular one. Yet this upstart leader, even in early manhood, could hardly have been the simple child of nature they then supposed.

Much of his boyhood had been passed within sight and sound of the fur company's steamboats on the Missouri, and in more or less familiarity with trading stores and white traders, for he was born on Grand River, *Pa-la'-ni ta Wak'-pa* [Rees' River] now South Dakota, in 1834. Those were the days of Honoré Picotte and Major Galpin. Mrs. Galpin, a Sioux woman of much ability and good sense, whose position as wife of a prominent trader and agent gave her great influence with the Indians, had known Sitting Bull from childhood, and he had often relied on her judgment

and advice (though he did not always follow it) both in his younger years and while he was "out" as a "hostile" struggling to maintain his independence on the buffalo ranges farther west.

Mrs. Galpin was living at Standing Rock as late as 1884; her daughter, Mrs. Van Solen, at that time also lived at the agency. Another daughter, Mrs. Parkin, lived at the Cannonball, and their sister, Mrs. Harmon, lived in Bismarck. All three sisters were educated women and for all of them, but more especially, I think, for the first two mentioned who lived where he could see them oftener, Sitting Bull retained to the last the same friendship and esteem he had long felt for their mother.

Holy man, wise man, and prophet, this remarkable figure was by no means an ascetic, though on occasion he could fast and mortify the flesh with the best. It was no discredit for a holy man of the Sioux to be fond of women, rather the reverse. Sitting Bull was a thorough male, a "he"; and with Indians as with the old Romans the word "man" implied the manly qualities, virility and courage. Unquestionably he liked women and women liked him, but one great secret of his success with the ladies was that he could make distinctions. He could be all things to all women, white or red. He respected women of culture and intellect, and with such in numerous instances he showed himself capable of platonic attachments of rather a high order.

Quite early in life he began to cultivate the art of self-advertising, and seldom neglected to profit by his meetings with traders, U. S. Army officers, or those of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, newspapermen, missionary priests, bishops, all who might help to mold popular opinion in his favor, though at first it was only a craving for notoriety, and never did he betray much desire to win the friendship of U. S. Government officials.

In the winter of 1868-69 he sent his pictorial auto-

biography to General Morrow, then in command at Fort Buford, and about the year 1886 he sent as a present to no less a personage than the Pope a buffalo robe with his war exploits painted on it by his own hand. The gift to General Morrow may well have been his own idea. Buford was in his territory in so far as he chose to exercise his right of might to roam at will through country claimed by Cree and Assiniboin, for who was there to stop him; certainly not our frontier garrisons as then constituted. He had fought Morrow's untrained recruits to the very gates of the fort, and the idea of introducing himself to that commander, by name if not in person, would naturally appeal to his sense of dramatic fitness—but the Pope!—what could he know of the Pope or the channels through which a gift might reach him? Clearly there was some coaching here.

What finally became of this papal buffalo robe, I am unable to say. A recent search of the ethnological collections in both the Vatican and Lateran Museums failed to reveal a trace of it.

But the well-meant efforts of missionaries and others to lead Sitting Bull, by flattering his vanity, into the white man's road, through the portals of any Christian church, were futile. No more through his agency was the faith to be propagated among his people (except in a grotesque and unauthorized form) than by his famous tour of the East in 1884. The greatest mistake that was ever made in managing him, after his surrender, was in allowing him to be so exhibited. Had this been intended as a stroke of Machiavellian policy, which it was not, it would not have been so bad, for it did intensify the jealousy which already existed between him and other chiefs and so weakened the power of his tribe, as a whole, to do mischief.

The show, of which he was the main attraction, was in a sense educational and calculated to appeal to thoughtful people, and this in great measure because Sitting Bull

himself chose to give it that tone. For the success of the enterprise none could have decided more wisely. He made many friends among the whites and converted not a few to his way of thinking.

Mrs. McLaughlin, wife of the Standing Rock agent, went along as general adviser and interpreter. In the main the Indians followed her counsels, but in one or two instances, to the consternation of their mentor, they did yield slightly to the instincts of the wild. Among other things they were advised not to paint their faces too barbarously, to keep their costumes simple, and not display too great profusion of savage ornament; the white people would like them better so.

Sitting Bull spoke daily to crowds of listeners. To what extent, if any, his addresses were edited, censored, or embellished by suggestions from others would be hard to say, but it is certain they made a good impression. And why not? They were almost entirely a defense of himself and his people. He sought to show that in their wars with the whites they were right, which being for the most part incontestable he had little difficulty in proving, and, that far from being the cruel, wild race they were represented to be, they were in reality kindly and humane. Nor did he overlook the religious motive. He expressed his horror at the crucifixion of Jesus, and asserted with perfect truth and sincerity that had He come to the Indians instead of the whites not only would He not have been mistreated, but they would have loved and revered Him. He took little children from the arms of their mothers and held them on his knee, and kissed them. I had it on the word of Mrs. McLaughlin that all this was his own idea; he had not been prompted by anyone.

In view of later developments it was significant. Here, in my belief, was the real inception of the so-called "Messiah Craze," though it did not reach complete fruition until six years later, and like other great inventions it was

not all the work of one man. Other Indians helped it grow and received credit for it, but it was Sitting Bull, encouraged—who knows?—by unwitting, and thoroughly well-intentioned white accomplices, who first launched the idea.

As an orator Sitting Bull was impressive. His presence was a commanding one. Indeed, if the tendency to compare great Indians with smooth-shaven divines and statesmen were not so common I should be tempted to liken him to Beecher, not in face, for he was better-looking, but in general bearing. He was taller, though, and not as fleshy as Beecher was in his later years. His manner was earnest and convincing, his voice strong and loud, but in ordinary conversation, especially with ladies, it could be soft and ingratiating. No wonder they hung upon his words and invited him to their homes. Other members of the party, including Spotted Horn Bull and his wife, and Long Dog [*Cun'-ka Han'-ska*, You bet!] went too. And there were other excursions. At Coney Island the tough old warrior, Long Dog, was overcome at sight of the ocean and wept. Asked why it affected him so, he said he didn't know, except that he had often heard of it but never expected to see it.

The following winter back in his home camp Sitting Bull regularly received letters from a lady in the East.* These he took, not to some cynical male interpreter, but to his trusted friend, Mrs. Van Solen, a woman of tact and discretion, to read and translate to him, and to answer at his dictation. The lady's letters were couched in the figurative language attributed to Indians, spoke feelingly of the crying injustice suffered by "the Red Man" at the hands of "the Pale Face," and were eloquent in admiration for the great spiritual leader and patriot of the Sioux.

At this period Sitting Bull was evolving, unconsciously

* Mrs. Weldon.

perhaps, a mental attitude more in harmony with his new surroundings. In his earlier years he had won fame as a fighter. His record of coups, killings, and capture of enemy weapons and horses equaled many similar records of other noted warriors, even surpassed some. But this was not all; he had gained an outstanding reputation as holy man and prophet, and it was this, principally, which gave him the enormous prestige he enjoyed at the time of the Custer battle.

In that affair, except in Reno's retreat to the Little Horn and the bluffs beyond, there had been little chance for those displays of personal prowess which had always determined an Indian warrior's status. It was not possible to say with certainty which individual had been first to strike the body of Private X or Corporal Y, and there were enough carbines, sabers, pennons, and horses to capture to satisfy every man, woman, and child. More than one stripling boy lugged from the field that hot June afternoon a rifle and cartridges enough to make him stagger. And further, there had been no plan of battle, and no chief had been in command of more than his own followers.

Afterward the newspapermen, and later the showmen, had played up Sitting Bull as the warrior hero of the Little Big Horn. Still later, when it was deemed officially expedient to destroy his influence, he was accused of cowardice, and it was said that while others—notably Gall—had led the fighting, Sitting Bull “was making medicine in the hills.” The conflicting testimony on this point may be disregarded, the important fact from the Indian point of view being that Sitting Bull had prayed for victory, and prophesied it; his prayers had been answered, his prophecy fulfilled. By this he rose higher in the estimation of all tribes, even his enemies, than ever he could have done by a mere record of coups and horse stealing.

Sitting Bull admitted that he killed Custer, but only in the sense that his “medicine” had been stronger than the

Long Hair's, that whatever gods determine the outcome of battles had been on his side, and as we have seen on his Eastern trip he preferred to exhibit himself as a benign humanitarian of deeply religious leanings. This gave the whites who came in contact with him an entirely new conception of the man, and in a measure counteracted the derogatory propaganda.

From now on he regarded himself as an apostle to any who would hear him, excepting always officials of the Indian Bureau; he had no hopes of them. At the same time he boasted that he was an Indian unchanged and unchangeable, even, as he said sometimes, the only real Indian, and he never ceased to regret the passing of the good old days. In this he differed from Tendoy, chief of the Lemhi Shoshone. Tendoy had no illusions on that score. He could remember ten years farther back than Sitting Bull, to a time when his people were truly primitive, and he laughed at the younger generation who longed to go back to those conditions. "Young man no savvy," said Tendoy.

It was in this that Sitting Bull showed inconsistency. While he scoffed at the white man's ways, he was gradually adopting them; one might have supposed, almost, that he had decided to follow the white man's road. He lived in a rough log house some two miles below the fort, with *ti'-pi* alongside. He had a *wak-pa'-ma-ni* [agency] wagon and a team of "American horses, a log stable, and a totally inadequate haystack surrounded by a corral of poles. The winter was a hard one even for that country, and the white man's horses, unlike the elk and the half-wild Indian ponies, could not paw their winter feed from under the snow, nor yard among the young cottonwoods of the river bottom and rustle a living off twigs and bark. By mid-February their owner had exhausted his credit with the traders, buying hay for them. "The old fool!" said they. "What did he want American horses for, anyway?" The white man's road was not all smooth going.

In 1886, ten years after the annihilation of Custer's command, Sitting Bull again was permitted to tour the East and Canada, this time with Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, where perforce he had to let himself be exhibited in scalp-trimmed war shirt and trailing war bonnet, as Sitting Bull, the great war chief, hero of the Little Big Horn. "Hero of the Little Big Horn?" Perhaps. But "war chief!" He had on that occasion been more than war chief, but the white people could not understand.

Here was little chance to preach; the schedule of the show would not permit it. The crowds that came to see the attack on the Deadwood coach did not remain to hear sermons, but he never gave up his idea of spiritual leadership.

He had known De Smet in the earlier years, had met missionaries who tried to convert him, and a bishop who had urged him to submit to the power of the United States. Now, in the lands of the Queen Mother, in that most Catholic province of Quebec, he saw all about him evidence of the vast influence of the universal church, the fountain-head of whose power he was told lay in a certain Pope of Rome, evidently another great religious chieftain like himself. What more natural than to send to this newly discovered potentate, as a token of respect and brotherly esteem, and to show that there was no jealousy, a neatly tanned buffalo robe blazoned with his feats of arms? It was a regal gesture.

Having seen pictures of bishops, cardinals, and popes, with ringed right hand before the breast he possessed himself of a huge ring with a cameo on which was cut a cherubic head with short curls. This he wore on the middle finger of his left hand which on formal occasions he posed at about the fourth button of his waistcoat, when he wore one, as on such occasions he was likely to do. Of course the bishop's ring is worn on the third finger of the right hand, but probably he never noticed this, or thought it

of no significance. The clerical effect was heightened by a black silk handkerchief pinned close around the neck.

Altogether this was a profitable summer. Lack of opportunity to make white proselytes was compensated for by the presence of Ogallalas attached to the show, for events of four years later proved the success of his efforts in their behalf.

Life must have seemed dull on his return to Standing Rock, or rather to Grand River, for he had been allowed to locate his camp at this point, forty-five miles from the agency, because it was known that with well-mounted troops and Indian trailers at Fort Yates, he could not get away if he wanted to. Meanwhile correspondence with the lady in the East continued, and the summer of 1889 found her in the Indian country. In 1890, also, she was there, and Sitting Bull was having frequent interviews with her. This high-minded woman seemed to feel it her duty and privilege to comfort the great man in his adversity. She was a hero worshiper whom few could understand. And those who did marveled at her unabating fervor.

By this time word was being received from the lower agencies that a man named Kicking Bear had actually seen and talked with the Messiah. Sitting Bull's teachings were bearing fruit. As might be expected, he was anxious to go to meet this man at Cheyenne River Agency, and several times applied for permission to do so, but each time was refused.

One morning a wagon drew up in front of the agent's office. It was driven by Sitting Bull. The lady from the East was also in the conveyance. "Major," she announced, "I am going to Cheyenne River, and Sitting Bull is to drive me." The Major replied that Sitting Bull had no pass to leave the reservation, and he did not think it advisable to give him one. There was some disposition to argue the point, and the upshot of the affair was that the lady was



Photo courtesy Notman, Montreal.

Sitting Bull, as the great religious teacher.

escorted beyond the Northern boundary of the Indian reservation and told not to come back.

I know that Major McLaughlin regretted the necessity of doing this, but the outlook was becoming ominous, far graver, probably, than this woman from the East, or even Sitting Bull, then realized.

Beyond the Cannonball, which bounded the reservation on that side, was the Parkin ranch, and here at the time were Mrs. Parkin and Mrs. Van Solen. To them the banished lady appealed for temporary shelter and advice. The jurisdiction of the Indian agent did not extend that far, but the ranch was connected with the agency by telephone, and the Major being a kindly soul with the welfare of all at heart, it is likely the arrangements made for the lady's accommodation did not conflict with his wishes. However that may be, there was an unoccupied dirt-roofed log cabin standing among the stunted oaks and box elders about a mile below the ranch, on the north side of the Cannonball at its junction with the Missouri; a veritable hoodoo shack. There was little of beauty in the immediate surroundings, or of inspiration in the drab sand bars and wide expanse of muddy water of the larger river, but here it was that the lady from the East and her young son took up their abode.

If the mountain will not, or, as in this case, cannot come to Mohammed, Mohammed must come to the mountain, so to this dreary spot came Sitting Bull, biweekly, after each issue day, for the rest of the summer—a hundred-and-forty-mile round trip from his camp on Grand River! It was a common sight that summer, Sitting Bull going and coming, driving a team of loose-jointed broncos hitched to the running gear of his *Wak-pa'-ma-ni* wagon, a few boards laid across the bolsters, on which he sat in his warm-weather toga and leggings of white sheeting shockingly in need of laundering and pressing. Behind him, seated in the sidewise, ladylike posture of the Sioux

squaw, rode always one of his wives, since Mrs. Weldon, to silence the talk of certain soldiers and ranch hands, had asked him not to come alone.

Mrs. Weldon remained at the Cannonball through the winter, after Sitting Bull's death, and when the ice broke in the Missouri the following spring she took the first steamboat down river to civilization. Her boy died on the way.

In July and August, 1890, I was camped with Flying By's band on Grand River. Even that early it was known that trouble was brewing, but it had not yet reached the acute stage. Major McLaughlin, at least, seemed to think I could keep out of trouble even at that distance from the agency, but he knew his Indians, and had a force of native police capable of watching both them and me.

On these summer days, when the spirit moved him, Sitting Bull, whose camp was a few miles above, would ride his black horse up and down the valley, not directly through the camps of chiefs who opposed his teaching, but within sight and hearing, shouting his chant or harangue to win converts. On a morning following one of these exhortations Flying By discovered that two families of his band had left during the night to join the prophet whose career was so soon to be cut short, and this form of recruiting was going on more or less throughout the Indian country.

Yet Sitting Bull seemed about as friendly as ever, if a trifle more thoughtful and reserved, though the last time I saw him at close quarters he showed no sign of recognition. I think this was not so much due to a growing antipathy towards the whites as the fact that I was intruding in a circle where I did not belong. It was a large ceremonial dance at Running Antelope's camp, and Sitting Bull was seated in a group with Gall, Antelope, and other prominent men—obviously a place reserved for the illustrious, not for common Indians, much less for white

men. The most famous of all Uncpapas, had he wished to be unfriendly, could have used this as an excuse to order me out, but this duty he left to Gall, who at that time could not be suspected of any special hostility, and he performed it with firmness blended with a courteous hauteur which was admirable.

This gathering was, I think, the greatest expression of nationalistic feeling I ever saw among them. It had all the characteristics of the usual war dance, and besides there was much giving away of ponies, blankets, and other property. It was a time demanding tact even between the various bands themselves. Sitting Bull was gradually drawing away from the chiefs who were disinclined to break with the government, and although everything was still outwardly friendly, some of these, and Gall among the rest, would before many suns begin to fear for their lives.

Having left the circle of distinguished chiefs, as requested, I took my place with my host, Flying By, in another part of the enclosure, where I belonged and should have gone in the first place. Here I had a good view, and ate my portion of the feast of dog meat. As this viand is rarely of late years offered to white guests, it is probable that you, dear reader, may never have an opportunity to taste it, so to satisfy your curiosity, if any, I will say that dog meat varies. I have eaten it when it was decidedly doggy, but on this occasion it was delicious, young, tender, something like chicken, with a suggestion, let us say, of lamb or fresh pork.

When it suited his purpose, Sitting Bull's manner toward white men could be ostentatiously cordial. I recall such an occasion, one of those routine councils where the Indians, knowing they will be effectively blocked from airing their real grievances, take it out in baiting the Big Cat (inspector) from Washington with sarcastic remarks in their own language, which of course the Big Cat does

not understand, and which the interpreter dare not translate, and finally adjourn the conference by shaking the dust from their blankets and walking out. All the benches were full when I came in, but Sitting Bull greeted me effusively and moved up so I could sit beside him. Then he filled his long pipe, and as we smoked together he talked and smiled affably to give the appearance of an intimate mutual understanding between us, as though I were his personal adviser. All this, of course, to mystify the Big Cat, for everyone else saw through it, but Major McLaughlin spoiled the show by introducing me to the inspector, and explaining the nature of my work there.

As the autumn of 1890 advanced the tempo of events became more rapid. Porcupine, a disciple of Kicking Bear, came among the Standing Rock Sioux and taught the new doctrine. Later came Kicking Bear himself for the same purpose. He was taken over the south line of the reservation and dismissed by two Indian policemen (trembling inwardly at the sacrilege they were committing). But the harm was already done; if the policy of arresting and expelling such envoys was to have the desired effect it should have begun with Porcupine.

The Ghost Dance had been introduced in its full vigor, with its sweating and fasting, its ecstatic trances, its visions of heaven on earth, of dead friends and loved ones, of the coming of the Messiah. Sitting Bull was now too busy, or afraid, to come to the agency, and of necessity his visits to the white lady of the Cannonball were interrupted.

I would not infer that this woman knowingly encouraged him in a course which could conceivably end only in bloodshed. From the beginning, impressed by his apparent singleness of purpose, his sincerity, she had regarded him as a victim of injustice. The prophet himself, even now, had no real hatred of the whites as a people, much less a wish to try conclusions with them by armed



Coming to the dance, Running Antelope's camp on Grand River,
August, 1890.



Dressing for the dance, Running Antelope's camp on Grand River,
August, 1890.

force. He believed beyond question that he was one of several divinely inspired leaders, perhaps the greatest of all, who were to see the ancient culture of the Dakotas re-established. But this was to be brought about by divine intervention. They had only to wait, steadfast in the new faith, for the consummation.

It is said that he did not believe in all the tenets of the new cult, that he was skeptical about the return of the spirits of the dead, but that he was open to conviction. Be that as it may, he was acting, it appears, as high priest in all the ceremonies on Grand River, while Mrs. Weldon, by this time thoroughly disgusted and alarmed at the turn of events, was trying to check them. As well try to check a tidal wave!

A prisoner on his own lands, officially hampered in his efforts to carry out what he believed to be the divine will, Sitting Bull, apostle of the new order, had been only too glad to find one intelligent member of the dominant race capable of sympathy and understanding. Up to a certain point the lady from the East had espoused his cause. Her responsibility for the inevitable outcome ended there, though she was powerless, at the end, to stem the tide which she had helped to set in motion.

But what, more particularly, gave rise to the Ghost Dance Religion, and what, beyond his clever guessing, was the precise secret of Sitting Bull's power? As we already know, since those days in 1884, when he exhorted his eager listeners at the Eden Musée and elsewhere, perhaps even earlier, the unworthiness of the whites and their flagrant disobedience of their God had been a favorite topic with him.

Probably at first, in the new experience of addressing a white audience, he had allowed himself to go too far, had exceeded the bounds of good taste, but they had taken his scolding in good part, and approved of all he said. Naturally he accepted this as an acknowledgement that

he was right and they wrong. What did he know of the contrite heart? How could he know that the white man in his quality of good Christian enjoys the excoriation of the revivalist?

A characteristic feature of primitive religions is their numerous taboos forbidding the eating of this or the touching of that. Indian religions were no exception. Christianity, on the other hand, imposes few authentic restrictions of this sort though some have added apocryphal ones which were enforced strictly in the case of the Indians fifty years ago. If the Indian were told that good white men did not drink beer, attend the theater, dance, play cards, or chew tobacco, that to do these things was contrary to Christian teaching, he believed it. The rougher elements of the mining camps and frontier towns were obviously bad white men.

At one Indian school the teachers were forbidden to chew gum, so, naturally they did so on the sly. This excellent restriction was intended no doubt as much to spare the Indians a bad example as to protect the young ladies from themselves, for there is reason to believe that the aborigines chewed the native spruce gum ages before manufacturers discovered chicle.

On the whole the people of the agencies were of exemplary conduct, but even so the Indian got an occasional shock. Having been brought to believe, let us say, that whist is an abomination in the sight of the white man's God (though "parchesi is all right"), imagine his consternation on blundering on a group of respectable agency employees secretly indulging in the forbidden pastime. A moccasined foot, be it remembered, makes little noise.

While he could be kept on the large, remote reservations, the Indian had no means of knowing what the average white man was like, but later, when considerable parties were allowed to join shows which toured the United States and Europe, they found that a majority of the best

white people violated the very rules the Indian had been taught were essential to a Christian's salvation. What then must he conclude? That the whites are a race who violate their taboos, to the Indian mind a thing unthinkable, a wicked folly almost incredible.

As a rule, the requirements of his religion are concrete and tangible, and do not run counter to his natural instincts. Morals, in the restricted sense, the great stumbling block of the God-fearing Christian, have little to do with it. If he has observed his taboos, made the necessary sacrifices, performed the prescribed rites, been honest with his neighbor and generous to the poor, he admits it freely, and on certain occasions he is expected to boast of it, even as the Pharisee. These things with him are purely matters of fact; either he has, or has not done them, and if he has, he sees no reason why he should not say so. When the white man confesses himself a miserable sinner the savage takes him at his word.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Sioux should have gladly accepted the rumor, coming from some mysterious but supposedly divine source in the far Southwest, that God had decided that His people, the whites, were hopelessly incorrigible, that He was about to destroy them, and become henceforth the God of the Indians. The report was eventually traced to a Paiute Indian named Wovoka, but at first its origin was vague. From it grew the Ghost Dance, a religion which taught the destruction of the white race who were to be submerged by a deluge of mud. Whether Mrs. Weldon and other well-wishers of the red man were to be spared is not clear, but the belief was that the earth was worn out, that the wave of mud would not only wipe out their oppressors, but would provide a new soil on which would grow luxuriant grasses. During the mud deluge the Indians were to be taken up into the sky—for a short period only, until the earth was again fitted for their habitation. Then—picture to yourself the grandeur

of the conception—the dead would come to life, and under guidance of the Messiah (none other than Christ, the Savior) all would return to the revived world bringing with them vast herds of buffalo, elk, and other game; yes, and plenty of sleek ponies, black, white, bay, “blue,” and pinto. And make no mistake, the Sioux of that day were sorely in need of a messiah.

There was the possibility, of course, that some blood might have to be shed in ridding this terrestrial paradise of the white usurpers. A warlike people like the Sioux would hardly be satisfied with a bloodless victory wrought by miracle. There would be no opportunity to display their daring, yet many did not disdain the magic of the *o'-gli wa-kan'*, the sacred shirt (*Anglice* “ghost shirt”), which promised invulnerability. It was pleasanter to feel, while showing off one's bravery, that one was running no risk.

We now have the spectacle of a tribe of Indians—savages, if you wish—beaten in their long and determined fight for independence and their primitive customs, about to make the supreme effort to throw off the white man's yoke and destroy the white race, not with their own native weapons, nor with the help of their own deities, but by the intervention of the white man's God, whom they had won over, and with the white man's arms and inventions.

For example, some of the Sioux, even middle-aged men who knew no English, could write their own language, an accomplishment introduced originally by the missionaries, and by this means and the help of the United States mail the bands at the various agencies kept each other informed of plans for the coming upheaval.

Now what was Sitting Bull's part in all this? Up to the present, only that of the modest citizen who is asked to legitimize by acknowledging as his own a foundling of doubtful paternity. True, he had begun years before to preach about the willingness of the Indians to receive the Savior if He had come among them, but he had not gone

so far as to predict a second coming of the Messiah for the exclusive benefit of the red man. The dove he had sent forth while evangelizing the Eden Musée and Wild West show had, after long absence, returned by way of Fort Hall, Pine Ridge, Rosebud, and Cheyenne River, bearing a sprig of some strange plant unknown to him. It might be good medicine to cure the ills of his people, or it might be a noxious herb from the desert of Nevada. He must have time to study it, to think things over.

But why must he, necessarily, have anything to do with it? Because the Indians looked to him for guidance. He must make his decision. His own people were becoming impatient, and there was already whispering among the white officials of the advisability of "securing the person of Sitting Bull." They had long pretended to ignore him as a coward, liar, mercenary imposter—a man, in fact, completely discredited among his own tribesmen.

Even at the lower agencies, where, owing to the presence of men like Kicking Bear, Porcupine, Crow Dog, and others, the Ghost Dance had gained adherents sooner than at Standing Rock, there was hope that Sitting Bull would not longer withhold his approval. The great Uncpapa was needed to complete the setting; he must accept leadership or lose prestige.

Probably it is useless to seek beyond his reputation as holy man for the secret of this man's greatness. Personally, I failed to see wherein his power lay, but power of some sort he surely had. I have spoken of his forthright earnestness as a public speaker, of the sheer persuasiveness of his resonant voice. I have said he was pleasant to meet, yet there were times when he seemed to be almost dull and slow witted. I should say his conversation lacked the delicacy and charm so characteristic of many of his people, but as Molière has it: "A fool who says nothing is not to be distinguished from a wise man who holds his peace," so it may be that the apparent mental inertia of Sitting

Bull was due to his belief that whatsoever is more than Yea, yea; or Nay, nay; cometh of evil.

In order to sway multitudes a man must be sincere, or a clever charlatan to give the impression of sincerity. If Sitting Bull had that kind of cleverness there was little outward sign of it. No, he and his followers were honestly deluded. There are certain phenomena of religious exaltation which have puzzled wiser men than Sitting Bull throughout the ages, and such phenomena were not lacking in the Ghost Dance.

By December (1890), the Brulés of Rosebud and the Ogallalas of Pine Ridge were in open revolt. At the instigation of Crow Dog (who after his killing of Spotted Tail had shown so strong a desire to emulate the white man), and of Short Bull and others, they had fled from their agencies more in fear than in anger, to the edge of the White River badlands, where they were waiting for the other bands to join them. The presence there of the great Uncpapa high priest was urgently needed, and it was believed that knowing this, he was secretly preparing to slip away from his Grand River camp when the order was issued to arrest him (in the euphemistic phrasing of the War Department, "to secure his person"), and deliver him or *it* to the military authorities at Fort Yates. Few, I imagine, were greatly surprised when the frozen object later unloaded at the fort proved to be *it*.

Both the Indian Bureau and the War Department had been in favor of entrusting the capture of this supposed desperado to the military. Officialdom was worried, the West was frightened; both believed that, if bungled, the attempt might lead to a serious Indian war. The press did little to allay the popular excitement. If left to them, would not the native police be moved by sympathy for their own flesh and blood rather than loyalty to the government? Major McLaughlin did not think so, but with the exception of a very few army officers and others who



Sitting Bull, his mother, daughter, and daughter's child.



Photo courtesy Goff, Bismarek, N. D.

Sitting Bull's son.

relied on his judgment, he was alone in his opinion. The Indian Bureau, certainly, had little confidence in its own constabulary.

The dependability of the native Indian police varied according to circumstances. Under some agents, orders were carried out or ignored as the members of the force thought best. When confronted with a duty which was distasteful to him the Indian policeman had been known to strip off his uniform and badge and let it go at that. In some cases one could hardly blame him. But *Ma'-za Ka'-ga*, [The Iron Worker], agent at Standing Rock, was a firm and just man. He was not in the habit of giving foolish orders, and also, for nine years he had been building up a corps of picked men who knew and trusted him, and whom he knew and trusted. Thus The Iron Worker encountered few difficulties.

In 1890, they were commanded by a lieutenant, Bull Head, and other native officers who were answerable to the agent, but in 1884-85 the force, then, as one might say, still under probation, was headed by a white chief of police, James Merrill. Jim Merrill had been a "galvanized Yank," a Confederate soldier taken prisoner during the Civil War, and given the choice of remaining a prisoner or enlisting in the Federal army for service exclusively on the frontier, against the common enemy of North and South, the Indian. Like many other young fellows in the same predicament he had chosen the latter alternative, had fought against the Minnesota Sioux at Birch Coulee, and among the Standing Rock Indians had won the name, *T'a-tan'-ka Ca-ga-lo'-an*, [Eight Bulls], having killed that number of buffalo with a six-shooter in a single straight-away run. This he had done in competition with Indians in the tribal hunt, not by judiciously nursing a small band of animals into a milling mass and circling around them till all were down. It was double the number a good hunter might expect to kill under such conditions, and it raised

him in the estimation of these people who had always lived by the chase.

Of the mustache-and-imperial cut of frontiersman, Merrill was tall, well set up, convincing; of that imperturbable calmness which commands respect among the toughest. His Indians were still a trifle diffident in performance of their duties. Since they had no clubs, their weapons were fair words, and—if needs must—rifles and six-shooters. Knowing nothing of fisticuffs, and disdaining rough and tumble as beneath their dignity and calculated to render them ridiculous, their prisoners came willingly, or they had to shoot them. Over a long period, this being understood, the latter alternative had never to be employed; a little friendly persuasion, or in the case of a drunken man even coaxing, usually won the day. In such matters Indians are far more gentle and patient than white men.

There was none of the soldierly bearing of their brothers in arms, the U. S. Army, even in what Dr. Treacy, irreverent veterinary of the Seventh Cavalry, was pleased to term its "penitentiary uniform." At least the men of Fort Yates, from noncommissioned officers down, were wont to take their uniforms to old Jimmy, the tailor, from whose ministrations they emerged transfigured, blouses fitted to the waist, trousers skintight at thigh, but with a "spring bottom" flaring to the very toes.

Not so the Indian police; their blackish-blue uniforms were worn first to last as issued, without apology and without amelioration. Sitting on the ground like other Indians, the policemen's pantaloons bagged abominably. Their black hats took incredible shapes; their flimsy brass buttons with a man ploughing for device symbolized bucolic rather than martial ardors. Drill or tactics they knew not, but they could shoot better than the average soldier, and, because the government furnished the ammunition and opportunity for practice, far better than other Indians.

These men were all brave; material dangers did not daunt them, but some lost courage when confronted with the supernatural. In those days for an errand needing more than ordinary tact and temerity, it was Shave Head who was chosen. He it was who was most commonly sent to Sitting Bull's camp to enforce orders which that dignitary might resent. Possibly such daring sprang from a lack of respect for the old traditions.

Now, for the arrest of Sitting Bull, in 1890, Major McLaughlin, by adding a few extra volunteers to his regular force, could muster forty-three men. Some cavalry were to be sent to Oak Creek, about twelve miles from the camp, there to await daylight. It was understood that they were to be used only in case of need, the commandant at Fort Yates having deferred to the agent's wish that the arrest be made by his own police.

I have said they were picked men; at the present time they were doubly so, though the force lacked the cohesion it had possessed but a few months back, for some of its seasoned members had resigned when it became known that Sitting Bull was to be arrested for no better reason, apparently, than that his religious views, though Christian in the main, were in certain details heretical. The places of these men were filled with some of less delicate scruples. One in particular, my erstwhile "brother" and (artist's) model, Hawk Man, not previously noted for ethical integrity, joined as a "special," and, though in the thick of the fighting, never got a scratch. In this, his unique opportunity to distinguish himself, I am happy to say he bore himself exceeding well.

It was more than arrows and bullets these forty-three had to fear as they rode into Sitting Bull's camp a half-hour before the freezing gray dawn of December 15. Under their uncouth uniforms they were still what we call savages, with all the savage's awe of the miraculous. They were intruding on ground where some supernatural power

had daily worked marvels in the name of the new religion, and with this spirit force they were about to try conclusions. None knew their secret misgivings better than The Iron Worker who had sent them there, and none relied more confidently on their determination to obey his orders.

The sleeping prophet was awakened; while he dressed his horse was brought and saddled. He was led forth. He had put on his best clothes, as Indians will when they have a presentiment of death on the battlefield. Meanwhile his followers had gathered, armed, and were surrounding the police. On his right and left walked Bull Head, lieutenant, and Shave Head, first sergeant, of the police.

As he approached his horse and was about to mount, he seemed suddenly to realize the full import of the situation, stopped abruptly, and began to shout his orders. Flanked by these two men he knew to be unshakable, he must have known he was taking a desperate chance. His voice betrayed his excitement; he was angry. Had he forgotten his danger, had he lost all caution—who shall say? Amid the babel of voices someone (Sitting Bull himself, perhaps) cried: "Shoot the two leaders; the rest will run away."

A crash of rifles. Bull Head and Shave Head crumpled to the ground. With them went Sitting Bull, a ball through his body sped by the stricken Bull Head, another through his head from the pistol of Red Tomahawk who stood behind. Needless to catalogue the other wounds and marks of blows found on the body later; with those two shots, that sinister winter morning, the hopes of the red tribes were dashed to earth.

Some fourteen Indians lost their lives that day, men I knew well, some who fought for a principle, good men killed on both sides; and many were wounded—some of them crippled for life.

Barring minor divagations, Sitting Bull's people were right in the wars the government waged against them; it

was the government, not they, who broke the treaties. There was "gold at the grass roots" in the Black Hills; "the Northern Pacific must go through." Treaty or no treaty, "barbarism must not be allowed to stand in the way of civilization." It was the old argument of expediency; the shortest way out of a bad bargain. "Barbarism," and later "fanaticism," were traditional foes of "civilization." It was the detestable war cry of the Crusaders revamped for nineteenth-century needs, "*Dieu le veut. Guerre aux infidèles!*" It was Captain John Smith's "Round bullets for Christians, square bullets for Turks."

War is a necessary evil. Were there no such thing, necessity being the mother of invention, man would have to invent it, but there are supposed to be certain standards of decency even in so vile a business. It is well to remember, also, that civilization and barbarism are comparative terms, and there is always the possibility that some powerful nation may consider itself more cultured than ourselves.

In this book, *My Friend the Indian*, Major McLaughlin gives an excellent account of the events which led to the death of Sitting Bull. Probably, if the Major had been allowed to follow his own judgment without interference, Sitting Bull might have been taken alive. But *cui bono?*

Once, by special permission, I visited two Apache prisoners who were confined in a casemate of the old "cheesebox" fort on Governors' Island, New York Harbor. In all likelihood none of the millions in the great cities around them knew they were there. As well be buried alive, for how long they did not know, nor did I, though they asked me that question and many more I could not answer, and what finally became of them I never knew. I was told they were recalcitrants—unrepentant war prisoners who would not give in; the government was taking this means to break their spirit—a means utterly incomprehensible to the two Apaches.

Sitting Bull was a recalcitrant. Comparing his fate

with that of the Apache prisoners of Governor's Island, I sometimes wonder, if, knowing the alternative, as he probably did, it was not of his own choosing.

Sitting Bull ending his days in a fortress would not have been Sitting Bull.



Rain in the Face

IF EVER mortal man had fame thrust upon him through the bickerings of officials in which he had no concern—of which, in fact, he had no knowledge—and through the romantic imaginings of poets, soldiers, and soldiers' wives, that man was Rain in the Face, and few have had their lives so completely spoiled by the gnawings of a hollow ambition. Amiable savage that he was, creature and puppet of circumstance, even his name, a name calculated to arrest instant attention, came to him through a trivial accident of which he was the protesting victim.

It seems that while he was an infant, swaddled hand and foot, helpless in the beaded baby case, he was left out of doors one fine summer day, when, a shower coming up unexpectedly, his face was pelted by large drops of rain before his mother could rescue him. His infantile rage at this indignity caused so much amusement that he was forthwith called Rain in the Face.

It appears, however, that the incident had a deeper significance, for *Wa-kʷ-yan* [The Lightning] was in the storm, was pleased with the child, and received him under its protection. I have a pictograph of the name, drawn for me by the man himself, which clearly shows this conception, though in his later and sadder years he seems to have had his misgivings, and at one time, in camp on

Grand River, he set up a small cedar tree in his lodge to frighten the lightning away.

The *Handbook of American Indians* has the following:

He [Rain in the Face] received his common name as the result of a personal encounter, when about 10 years of age, with a Cheyenne boy, whom he worsted; he received several blows in the face, however, causing it to be spattered with blood and streaked where the paint had been washed away. When a young man, he joined a war-party against the Gros Ventres, some of whose horses they stole, but the Sioux party was overtaken and had to fight for their lives. Rain-in-the-Face had his face painted to represent the sun when half covered with darkness—half black and half red. Fighting all day in the rain, his face became partly washed and streaked with red and black, so again he was named Rain-in-the-Face.

As all the tribes of whom I have any personal knowledge moisten their face paint with water (not with grease, as we have so often been told) rain, blood, or sweat will make it run in streaks. That is a common occurrence, but we see here a marked tendency to endow all such happenings with symbolic or prophetic meaning. Even allowing for the proneness of primitive man to see signs and portents in simple things, there will be noted, before this chapter is finished, a remarkable series of incidents in which faces, red and white, human and equine, are variously splashed, streaked, marked, or burnt by rain, blood, paint, or powder.

So much concerning the name Rain in the Face, but as a matter of fact this was not the name by which he was generally known among his own people, the Uncpapa Sioux, in the days when I saw him often and heard him spoken of daily by friends and relatives. To the whites, it is true, he was, and always had been—always will be—Rain in the Face. They knew him by no other name, but the Sioux called him *Tok'-i'-tcu-wa*, which means "the Enemy-Taker," or "He Who Takes the Enemy," it being customary for an Indian to discard his boyhood name for

a more honorable one, or one more suggestive of warlike prowess, after he had gone on the warpath or accomplished some noteworthy deed. Often, too, an Indian may have, in his own language, a name different from that by which he is known in English. John Grass is an example. *Pe-ji* [Grass] was his father's name, which was given to the son as a surname by the whites, but to the Indians John Grass is *Ma-to wa-taq'-pi*, [Charging Grizzly Bear] and, in passing, it will do no harm to add that John Grass is one of the brightest minds in the Sioux Nation.

But Rain in the Face, [*I-to' ma-qa'-ju*] has found a niche in literature and history; to attempt a change of name at this late day would be foolish, even if such a thing were possible.

Possessing many of the qualifications of the hero of romance, immortalized by two noted poets—Longfellow and Whittier—Rain in the Face, when first dragged forth, much against his will, for the curious scrutiny of a highly incensed public, was good looking, had delicate, regular features, and seemed little more than a boy. He may have been older than he looked, for I think he told me in 1884-85 that he was forty-five years old, which would make the year of his birth about 1840, though it has been given as 1835.

He had a reputation for courage—a brother, Shave Head, was noted for bravery—and certainly he had the fortitude to endure torture, for in the sun dance he had had the toggles fastened to the small of his back, which was considered a more severe ordeal than to be hung up, in the usual way, by the skin of the breast.

His early career was marked by a number of exploits of the type which bring distinction to the savage warrior, but his reputation as a "fiend incarnate" was forced upon him by his admiring enemies, and probably was undeserved. I know that at first he tried honestly to decline the doubtful honor, but there is reason to believe that toward the

last, having lost credit with his own people and seeing that the whites would not have him on any other terms, he welcomed, almost with gratitude, the reputation which they had always insisted was his by right, though much of it, he knew, was based on pure fiction in the fabrication of which he had had no part. The fact that his personal history was connected, through no desire of his, with such interesting characters as "Lonesome Charley" Reynolds, General Custer, and his brother Tom, and that he had Mrs. Custer as his biographer and chronicler of his war-like deeds, brought him to the attention of the public as nothing else could, while his famous threat to be avenged on the Custers (if he ever made it) prepared the popular imagination for a sensational climax for which the disaster of the Little Big Horn seemed to furnish the logical and ideal setting.

Let us go back to 1873. On August 4 of that year, while on the Stanley expedition up the Yellowstone, General Custer, having gone ahead with about ninety men of the Seventh Cavalry, was engaged by a large body of Sioux. During the fighting Dr. Honsinger, the veterinary, and the sutler, Mr. Baliran, riding behind the advance guard, were cut off by Indians and killed. Their bodies were not scalped or mutilated. Much was made of the fact that they were civilians and unarmed (though the Indians may not have known this till later), but they were part of a military expedition whose right to invade the country was open to question, and there were two armed cavalymen in the party, one of whom was killed, while the other managed to make his escape.

In the winter of 1874-75, Charley Reynolds (Custer's scout killed later at the Little Big Horn) was at Standing Rock watching an Indian dance where the warriors were recounting their exploits. One young brave told how he had killed two white men, with details of time and place, and other circumstances which enabled Reynolds to recog-

nize him as the slayer of the two civilians on the Yellow-stone.

The young Indian proved to be Rain in the Face. Reynolds reported his discovery to Custer at Fort Lincoln, and at once, great indignation—righteous indignation at the thought that here, less than sixty miles from the post, was an Indian living comfortably on the government's bounty, who boasted (in a language which white men are not supposed to understand) that he had "murdered" two men attached to the military arm of that same government. True, other Indians had killed white men and had returned to pass the winter at the agencies, but there were certain controversial matters pending which rendered this particular case timely and exactly suited to Custer's purpose. Rain in the Face must be captured at all costs and held as an exhibit.

After one or two unsuccessful attempts, one hundred cavalymen were sent to Standing Rock, under sealed orders, to effect the arrest, but, in order to hide from the Indians their true purpose, some of the men were sent to the lower camps ostensibly to search for two Indians, Brave Bear and The Only One, who had murdered (in this case I think the word was rightly used) some settlers near Pembina, on Red River.

Deceived by this strategy, or perhaps not realizing at all that they had any designs against him, Rain in the Face sauntered into the trader's store, where Colonel Tom Custer was in wait with a number of his men. Here he stood around with apparent unconcern, his blanket hiding his face, and also his repeating rifle, which he carried in characteristic Indian manner, hugged against his body, stock up and muzzle down.

Just how the Colonel learned his identity I do not know, but as the Indian leaned against the counter the officer caught him from behind and pinioned his arms so that he was helpless. The prisoner was taken to Fort Lincoln and

confined there, and General Custer locked himself in a room with him and finally got the whole story from him. On this occasion, says Mrs. Custer, in *Boots and Saddles*, "he showed some signs of agitation." This was natural, as such a situation, in the mind of a primitive savage, would be fraught with sinister possibilities, and Rain in the Face was a primitive savage not lacking in imagination, and also one whose face, when surprised, revealed his emotions in spite of himself. Rain in the Face, on the other hand, told me that on the same occasion the General's hand trembled when he shook hands with him, and of course the young Indian drew from this, conclusions detrimental to his distinguished enemy, and flattering to himself. Custer was a man of great nervous energy, thoroughly in earnest, and no doubt it was a tense moment for both of them. One is reminded of a time in 1623, when Captain Standish, having "his company about him," got four Indians "in a conuenient roome" (though Custer was alone), and fell upon them without warning, killing three and capturing the fourth, who was afterward hanged. "It is incredible," says Captain John Smith, who relates the story, "how many wounds they indured, catching at their weapons without any feare or bruit, till the last gasp." Rain in the Face never heard of this exploit of Miles Standish, but an Indian is quick to know when he is trapped, and is not overtrustful of an enemy who holds him in his power.

It was probably pure coincidence that Custer at this period was also on the track of a number of civilians suspected of acts of dishonesty in connection with their work about the post. Two or more had been arrested, and one of them, a wagon master accused of stealing hay and grain from the quartermaster's stores, was confined in the guardhouse with Rain in the Face; in fact they were chained together. About the beginning of April, 1875, these two managed to get out and, cutting their chains,

escape in opposite directions. It is well known that an Indian is not easy to hold in a frontier guardhouse, but some thought the white prisoner had accomplices on the outside who aided in the escape, and that the guard connived at it. If so, this was evidently not in accordance with General Custer's plans, for the wagon master was trailed by the Indian scouts to Square Buttes Creek, where he had taken shelter in the camp of Vic Smith and was there arrested by a detachment of cavalry. The Indian, who had been held for murder (a charge which would be hard to substantiate), had been threatened with the noose, and was now thoroughly scared, but he was not recaptured. Maybe Custer was glad to be rid of him.

Now, what effect, if any, had the General's treatment of this wagon master and this Indian—both, in themselves, relatively unimportant personages—on the outcome of the campaign of 1876? Apparently none. Yet it would not need a very wild flight of imagination to see in them symbols of two relentless forces with but one common interest, their enmity to Custer. These two, political intrigue and the unconquered Indian, were to oppose him to the end.

It is commonly believed (and I cannot gainsay it) that Rain in the Face, after his escape, sent back word that he had joined Sitting Bull and was waiting to be revenged on "Long Hair" [General Custer] and his brother, Colonel Tom Custer. In this, the arrest by Colonel Custer, the imprisonment by General Custer, the mixed emotions of admiration and horror which the youthful, mild-mannered Rain in the Face inspired in the hearts of the ladies of the garrison, in his escape, and his alleged threat to avenge himself, we have the key to what I am tempted to call the Rain in the Face myth, "The Revenge of Rain in the Face."

"Revenge!" cried Rain-in-the-Face,

"Revenge upon all the race

Of the White Chief with yellow hair!

And the mountains dark and high
From their crags reëchoed the cry
Of his anger and despair."

So sang Longfellow, and the public has always insisted that having so good a chance to wreak a barbarous vengeance, Rain in the Face, as a matter of course, must have taken advantage of it. But let us leave this subject for the moment, and consider certain seemingly irrelevant events which may have had more to do with the fate of Custer and his men than at first glance might appear.

In the less than a year which had followed the escape of Rain in the Face and the retaking and conviction of the wagon master, there had been an upheaval in officialdom. While General Custer was making preparations for the expedition of 1876 against hostile Indians in the Yellowstone region, an investigation was in progress in Washington looking to the impeachment of General William W. Belknap, Secretary of War, for "high crimes and misdemeanors while in office." The articles charged, in substance, that the Secretary had appointed Caleb P. Marsh, of New York City, as post trader at Fort Sill. Mr. Marsh, unable to attend to the sutler's business at so remote a post, requested that the name of John S. Evans be filled into the commission, and then, according to the articles of impeachment, a formal agreement was drawn up between Marsh and Evans, by which Evans was to pay Marsh \$12,000 a year, "quarterly in advance." The charges further stated that the Secretary of War "at or about the end of each three months, during the term of one whole year, did unlawfully receive" from Marsh \$1500 in consideration of the appointment by him of Evans.

* This agreement, on its face, was probably harmless, though the wisdom of putting it in writing proved to be extremely dubious. It was drawn up in the office of a young lawyer named E. T. Bartlett, but I am told there were two of that name. The Edward T. Bartlett I knew for many years was later judge of the Court of Appeals of New York State, a man highly esteemed, and one who could hardly be connected with anything unethical.

This was the system which General W. B. Hazen had called the "farming out of post-traderships," in a letter to the Secretary of War, which was in part as follows:

. . . I have been guided conscientiously by a desire to effect what I believe to be a great advantage to the Army, the saving to it of \$2,000,000 annually, more even than its late increase of pay, besides ridding it of a corrupting influence, the present system having many of the features of bribery and extortion, as goods are usually sold to officers at cost and to others at a high profit, while the system of farming (not unusual) adds an additional cost which must be paid by the troops. I have tried before to get this matter before you, but it meets its usual barrier in the Office of the Commissary General.

Were General Hazen's efforts welcomed by the Secretary of War? Probably not, if the conditions General Hazen describes in a letter dated May 14, 1876, to the *Army and Navy Journal*, were in any way the result. He says:

. . . although stationed for four years in the midst of the Indian country, where active expeditions were frequently sent out of which my own regiment formed a part, I have been invariably kept at my post, while sometimes a majority of my regiment has gone to make up the command of an officer junior to me in rank. These appearances have not only attracted the notice and comment of my personal friends, but of a large portion of the Army. . . .

On March 2, 1876, the Committee on Expenditures in the War Department reported—that they found at the very threshold of their investigation such unquestioned evidence of the malfeasance in office by General William W. Belknap, then Secretary of War, that they found it to be their duty to lay the same before the House without further delay.

They further report that this day at eleven o'clock A. M. a letter of the President of the United States (Grant) "was presented to the committee accepting the resignation of the Secretary of War . . . which the President informs the com-

mittee was accepted about ten o'clock and twenty minutes this morning. . . ."

Though the Secretary's resignation would seem to have removed the necessity of going on with the trial, the Senate for some reason did go on with it, and as though needing further testimony, sent a summons to General Custer, at Fort Lincoln, requiring his immediate presence in Washington. For what purpose? General Hazen had written to the chairman of the committee:

By referring to the proceedings of the House Military Committee, of March, 1872, you will find precisely the same information given by me then as that upon which your investigation is founded. . . . I have waited patiently for years, never doubting I shall be finally vindicated, though at times feeling very heavily the weight of displeasure of those high in power for daring to tell the truth respecting the great outrage upon the Army.

Here, indeed, was a curious state of affairs. The charges on which Hazen could not obtain a hearing in 1872, were sufficient, in 1876, to cause the Secretary of War to resign, and the President to accept his resignation without a hearing, or at least before the charges could be made public in the Senate. Did Custer have anything to do with this change of heart?

Custer was not called to Washington till nearly two weeks after Belknap's resignation. Much against his will he abandoned the preparation for his coming expedition, and late in March arrived at the capital, where, after waiting more than a month, he was given to understand that his testimony would not be needed, and he might return to the West. He took his departure, but got no farther than New York when he was recalled. Returning, he protested that his presence was urgently needed with his command, that his absence from it was entirely contrary to his wishes.

Custer being thus unavoidably detained, the Secretary

* All this is to be found in the *Congressional Record*, Forty-fourth Congress, First Session, Washington, 1876

of War issued instructions on April 28, "coming from the President," to send someone other than Custer to take charge of the expedition from Fort Lincoln.

On May 3, General Sherman, in Washington, telegraphed to General Sheridan, in Chicago, that Custer had left for his post in the West, and added: "He was not justified in leaving without seeing the President and myself. Please intercept him and await further orders; meantime let the expedition proceed without him."

Custer stated in reply that he called three times on General Sherman, but was told each time that he was absent in New York, and that he went to see the President, sent in his card requesting an audience, and, after a wait of five hours, the President had sent out word he could not see him.

On May 5, General Sherman telegraphed to General Terry, Department Commander at St. Paul, saying: "Have just come from the President who orders that General Custer be allowed to rejoin his post, to remain there on duty, but not to accompany the expedition supposed to be on the point of starting against hostile Indians under General Terry." Evidently the thing which had happened to Hazen was now happening to Custer.

But what was the mysterious cause of this enmity between Grant and Custer? Apparently it was no recent development. During the Grand Review in Washington (June, 1865), at the close of the Civil War, while the victorious Union Army was passing before its commander (Grant), Custer's horse is said to have become unmanageable, bolting past the reviewing stand without giving its rider a chance to salute—an extraordinary thing, it was thought, in the case of so noted a horseman.

Even though we search for no deeper cause, the two men, in temperament, must have been mutually—almost instinctively—antipathetic. Grant, matter-of-fact tradesman, deliberate, with no conspicuous sense of humor;

Custer, officer by career, impetuous cavalry leader, wielding the pen as lightly and as trenchantly as the saber, and, with it, laying bare, for the curious inspection of a civilian public, his grievances and his arguments against the policies of the man who was both President and potentially Commander in Chief of the Army.

They certainly were at odds over "the Administration's peace policy," whose advocates argued that it was more humane, and "cheaper to feed Indians than to fight them," and after Custer's victory at the Washita "the opponents of a warlike policy raised the cry that the military were making war on friendly Indians."

Thus put on the defensive, Custer retaliated in his *Galaxy* articles and in his book, *Life on the Plains*, with serious reasoning of his own, and here and there a sly dig at peace commissions and the peace policy, in the quaintly humorous speech of his scout, California Joe, who for the occasion was pictured as a simple, garrulous frontiersman hardly to be held accountable for his indiscreet utterances. The President of the United States could make no retort in kind. Apparently he was helpless under the stings of his agile opponent, but Ulysses Grant was not the man to forget, nor was Custer the man to let him.

One fact among many which the latter brought out in justification of his action on the Washita was that Indians, in whose camp he had found the bodies of a white woman and child (prisoners killed at his approach), had, after fighting fiercely against him, retreated toward Fort Cobb, and then returned to meet him with official credentials attesting their pacific disposition.

As early as 1867, trouble had been precipitated with the Cheyennes through an error of judgment which probably should not be blamed on Custer at all, yet (for what military, or other offenses he does not make clear) he was, "by the will of the director at Washington," placed under arrest. During the summer preceding the Washita cam-

paign he still had no command, and his regiment was ordered into the field without him. In this case, however, as later, in 1876, largely through the intercession of Sherman and Sheridan, he was allowed to rejoin his regiment, and lead it in the battle of the Washita, which, as already seen, brought him additional censure.

The accusation of inhumanity, and the assertion that he was warring on peaceful tribes, naturally rankled, and Custer, whenever he found a hostile band amply supplied and munitioned with agency goods, never failed to herald the fact with what, to certain officials, must have appeared unseemly gusto. Unquestionably, his motive in going to such trouble to apprehend Rain in the Face, and secure his confession, was to have at his call a living exhibit, evidence indisputable that enemies of the government were being fed and outfitted by the government, the inference being, of course, that somebody was making money by it.

In 1876, whatever foundation may have been laid for it in the previous years, the immediate cause of the obvious administrative disapproval of Custer is to be looked for in connection with the Belknap affair, or events which preceded it, yet, oddly enough, the records of that investigation fail to show that Custer testified at all. What then had he done, or said—what did he *know*—that had led to such a determined effort to consign him to official oblivion? Of those who can or could have enlightened us, nearly all have maintained discreet silence, or at most favored us with guarded hints which are meaningless to those not familiar with the facts.

Thus Elliot Coues,* speaking of the Belknap episode, says: "... this is no place to reopen the case—nor even to gallantly give *place aux dames*," then speaks of the reason for the Assiniboin separating from the Sioux, and in consequence being called "Rebels" by the latter. He tells us:

* Coues, Elliot, *Larpenteur Journals* (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1898), p. 393, footnote.

"The trouble seems to have been due to the same thing that caused the Trojan War and most other notable events in the history of the human race, beginning with the eviction from an original abode of peace—a woman, *varium et mutabile semper*, as Vergil hath it, with fine disregard of gender." This merely complicates the issue without throwing much additional light on it.

One exception, Judson Elliott Walker,* a former post trader, offers a more tangible clue. This author has a grievance; no doubt he is the same "Mr. Walker" mentioned by Secretary Belknap in his order to remove all *unauthorized* traders. "I understand," says the Secretary, "that a Mr. Walker still remains there [Fort Sill] with a stock of goods."

According to Walker, Custer had forced the removal of two of Belknap's traders, having discovered in the warehouse of one of them a part of the grain stolen from the quartermaster's stores, and he makes this further statement: "Custer's testimony, or rather that he was called upon by the Committee as probably conversant with the sale of post-traderships, excited the ire of Belknap, and here it was that President Grant arrayed himself by the side of Belknap against Custer. Belknap was a warm personal friend of the President's, and of his brother, Orville Grant, who will long live in the history of the Missouri River country as a successful speculator in the sale of frontier post-traderships."

No question about it: the President's brother had been on the upper Missouri, and in touch with post sutlers and army contractors, in just what capacity I do not know, but, if we assume that Walker's explanation is correct, it is plain to see that Custer was in decidedly hot water.

But let us return to St. Paul, where Custer has been shown the orders to General Terry, his Department Com-

* Walker, Judson Elliott, *Campaigns of General Custer in the Northwest*, (New York, 1881).

mander, allowing him to return to his post, but not to accompany the expedition. No possible doubt now as to who blocked his way. He addressed a dispatch to the President himself, asking to be permitted to go with the expedition in command of his own regiment.

Transmitted "through Military Channels," his dispatch to the President, and the latter's reply, accumulated endorsements embodying restrictions, conditions, and cautions, mostly betraying a desire to help Custer without drawing upon their authors the thunderbolts of the Presidential wrath. Grant, of course, saw through all this. There was that in his nature which could rise above personal dislikes and resentments; to a defeated foe he could be generous. Knowing that Custer was too good an Indian fighter to be left behind, he showed his good sense by allowing him to go with the expedition, in charge of his own regiment, but under command of General Terry.

But the popular author of the *Galaxy* articles, the dashing critic of Administration policies, the gallant *sabreur* of the scarlet hunting shirt and waving yellow locks, had learned his lesson. He had met, and at last felt the full power of a ponderous mechanism, the bureaucratic arm of the service, which refused to be thrust aside, and crushed all who would oppose it. In token of submission he had cut his hair to the conventional length. To the Indians of the plains he was still the "Long Hair," but in name only, for they would not know him on the battlefield. In the affections of his men he was still "Old Curly," but he was more thoughtful and preoccupied than ever they had known him.

Quite naturally, the investigations, misunderstandings, detentions, the balancing of old scores, the exchange of orders, the endorsements, caused some delay in the departure of the expedition, but this was no disadvantage to any but the troops who were to take part in it; the Indians had made good use of the time to recruit from the bands of

Cheyennes and Arapahoes, and bring in a few thousand more rounds of ammunition from God knows where—Peck, no doubt, or thereabouts.

It is not necessary to repeat here the story of Custer's battle on the Little Big Horn, the Greasy Grass of the Sioux, or to add to the existing mass of theory and conjecture as to the cause of his defeat, further than to point to the fact that his mind was not at ease. He knew that he had been given, grudgingly, one last chance to escape the Departmental *oubliette*, that failure on his part now would mean the end of his active military career, and the only cause for failure he could foresee was that his foe might escape him. Otherwise he might have taken time to reconnoiter the enemy's position, even though in so doing he imperiled his chance of holding them to an engagement.

It was not possible here, in the afternoon of a fine June day, with everybody stirring, to surprise a camp of this size, as he had surprised the camp on the Washita before dawn of a winter's morning; and to have waited another day for the purpose of scouting during the night would surely have thwarted his purpose. Though confident in their numbers, and in the "medicine" of Sitting Bull, these Indians never would have awaited the joint attack of Custer, Terry, and Gibbon, with infantry and gatling guns as well as cavalry. Therefore, to secure a decisive engagement there was but one thing to do—to attack at once, without waiting to learn the exact location and extent of the enemy encampment. While this was not precisely General Terry's intention, his orders had left the final decision, "when nearly in contact with the enemy," to Custer's judgment. Custer did not disobey orders; he was not unduly rash. It was never his habit to insist that the odds be overwhelmingly in his favor. Here, as on the Washita, he was willing to try, in the words he attributed to California Joe, to "make a spoon or spile a horn," and not knowing (for the reasons already stated) the exact

nature of the task before him, he had every confidence that he would succeed in "making a spoon."

His plan was for the three divisions of his command to charge the Indian camp simultaneously from different directions, he with his five companies at the lower (north) end, Reno with three companies in the middle (from the east), and Benteen with three companies at the upper (south) end. McDougall's company, guarding the pack train, could not have taken much part in the first onslaught, but would have come in as future developments might require. As it happened, all three divisions struck the river too far upstream (south) to carry out the plan of simultaneous attack. Custer came squarely on the Indian camp near its center, or rather nearer its upper end than the lower, as had been planned, and was obliged to march two or three miles down, or nearly parallel with the river, and much of the time in plain view from the camp, before he could carry out his part in the program. Reno found himself above the camp, and Benteen and McDougall were miles above, the position of these last being largely due to Custer's wish to follow his instructions to feel constantly toward his left (he was advancing from the east), so as to preclude the possibility of the escape of the Indians to the south, or southeast, by passing around his left flank.

Reno reached the valley first, rode down to the upper end of the camp, which extended some three miles and a half along the west side of the river, attacked, and was repulsed. In his retreat across the flat, in the fording of the river and the ascent of the hilly ground beyond, to the point where he made his final stand, he lost thirty-three men killed, and only seven wounded, this disproportion indicating clearly the deadly efficiency of these well-mounted, buffalo-running Indians in the pursuit of retreating cavalry.

So far from simultaneous were the attacks of Reno

him. It was a young Cheyenne named *Tce-tan'* [Hawk] who killed the Long Hair." This youth, according to Rain in the Face, crossed into British territory with the rest of the hostiles, but did not come back to this side at the time of the surrender. Rain in the Face told me he knew this young Cheyenne killed Custer because he was near enough to them both to see what occurred, and added that he (Rain in the Face) and the young Cheyenne were, as it happened, painted and ornamented in a similar manner, and rode horses of the same (buckskin) color. It was this resemblance, he thought, which must have given rise to the mistaken report. According to his story, he and the young Cheyenne both wore long war bonnets. They were both stripped to the breechclout, with their bodies painted yellow, and each had a blue shield. Rain in the Face said that *his* shield was *small*, and had attached to the face of it, on a long string, a down feather from the under-tail coverts of an eagle. The diminutive shield, of course, indicated the superior courage of its owner.

I also told Rain in the Face it had been said that he had cut out the heart of the Long Hair's brother, and eaten it. He listened to this statement with keen interest, but would neither affirm nor deny it. I imagined it was the first time he had heard it.

All accounts appear to agree that General Custer's remains were not mutilated, a fact which would dispose of the poetic fiction that Rain in the Face bore, as a ghastly trophy, the heart of the White Chief with yellow hair, but it may be that Longfellow was thinking of Custer's brother, Tom. In that case it should be remembered that while nearly all the bodies were mutilated more or less, there is no evidence beyond the mere rumor that Tom Custer's heart was removed, or eaten, by anyone. In fact, aside from Rain in the Face's story, there is very little Indian testimony to show that either of the Custer brothers was recognized by any of them. Only a few had ever seen

General Custer, and to all he was known by the descriptive name of Long Hair, which (though they did not know it) was no longer descriptive, Custer having cut his hair to the conventional length, "for convenience."

Rain in the Face was very frank in describing to me how he killed the two unarmed civilians in 1873, and told with evident pride of his crushing the head of one of them with a stone. He saw nothing to be ashamed of in this, though to me it seemed shockingly inept and amateurish to use for that purpose a mere stone picked at random from the hillside instead of a gayly ornamented pogamoggan, or tomahawk, designed for just such occasions.

To the savage mind, even if there had been no battle in progress, no armed cavalymen in the vicinity, there would have been nothing dishonorable in killing defenseless individuals of an enemy race, simply because they were defenseless. On the contrary, the very fact that his enemies—presumably through the favorable intervention of some supernatural power—had been delivered helpless into his hands so that he and his followers had only to dispatch them without danger to themselves, would redound to his credit as a partisan whose "medicine" was good—a safe leader for young warriors to follow.

It is possible some vague fear of punishment may have deterred him from telling all he knew about Custer's death, but I think not. I believe that had he killed Custer, or committed that other atrocity, he would have admitted it gladly.

Other Indians have smiled indulgently when I have repeated Rain in the Face's story to them, and have said there were so many in the battle and the firing was so incessant that nobody could possibly know who killed Long Hair. Charging Thunder, a man of excellent sense, took this view but added that some of the Sioux believed that Custer was killed by two Santee boys who were brothers. I have heard the same thing from the Ogallala, and Captain

J. S. Poland evidently refers to these boys when he says in his report: "The last man dispatched was killed by two sons of a Santee Indian, Red Top, who was a leader in the Minnesota massacre of 1862-63." Joseph H. Taylor* calls the father of these boys *Inkpaduta*, which means "Scarlet Top," or "Point." *Inkpaduta's* depredations began in Iowa, in 1857. It was his band which captured Abigail Gardiner, at Spirit Lake, in that year.

As compared to Sitting Bull, whose general demeanor was stolid and heavy, Rain in the Face was younger, of a more nervous temperament, and seemingly quicker witted, though I question if he was of a higher grade of mentality. Certainly he seemed more animated, more emotional—demonstrative, at least—but possibly not so sincere in his convictions, and though a pleasant, chatty companion when he grew to know you, he was at first suspicious and on his guard. This was not to be wondered at, as he had been taken by surprise from behind, and disarmed, on a former occasion, as the reader already knows, and as he had the same fear of assassination which haunted Sitting Bull, his eyes were like those of the proverbial owl in following your every movement, especially when you passed behind him.

He was a very frequent visitor at my workroom at Standing Rock, and during my first stay there I made two portrait studies of him, and later, another, on Grand River. In my room at the agency, back of where he usually sat, were many things which I needed from time to time in my work, and there also hung my six-shooter. For the first few days of our acquaintance I could never go behind him into this corner without his pivoting around and watching me uneasily every second, though in time he seemed to conclude I meant him no harm.

His features were very mobile, and he had a pleasant smile and twinkle of the eye when pleased or animated.

* Taylor, Joseph H., *Sketches of Frontier and Indian Life* (Bismarck, N. D., 1897).

One of his methods of self-praise was to compare himself to Sitting Bull, always giving the latter the unflattering end of the comparison. "Sitting Bull," he would say, "is fond of money, but I do not care for money. The thing that is dear to me, very dear to me, is the Sioux Country [*La-ko'-ta Ma-ko'-tce*]; it is that for which I have always fought." He said that Sitting Bull would write his name on a piece of paper and sell it to a white man for a dollar (I have even heard of his getting two dollars for his signature), which showed his love of money above all else. This was true, for Sitting Bull had learned to write his name from a copy someone had set him and had sold many of these autographs during his visit to the Eastern cities, though from those he wished particularly to favor, ladies especially, he would not ask payment.

Somewhat later, when Rain in the Face got me to write his name for him, as a model for him to copy, and some years later still, when I found him selling his autograph at Coney Island, I was forced to conclude that he had overcome his aversion to Sitting Bull's way of turning an honest penny. At first he was rather clumsy in his efforts to write, but with a little coaching he improved rapidly. Whether I was the first to instruct him in this valuable accomplishment I do not know, but I am certain I was not the last, for his later signatures show another influence, the capitals being formed differently. The primitive Indian is clever at imitating such things, but of course neither of these men had any conception of the meaning of the letters. Their names in English, written in our script, were to them absolutely meaningless marks, yet they found when they copied these marks exactly, even to the smallest dot, any white man to whom they were shown would at once pronounce the name of Sitting Bull, or Rain in the Face, as the case might be.

Among the party who made the Eastern tour with Sitting Bull was the old chief, Long Dog, who was so

deeply moved upon seeing the ocean, at Coney Island, that he burst into tears, saying he had heard of it all his life, and had longed to see it, but had never hoped to do so before he died. Now, however, in his old age, he was blessed with a sight of it. Rain in the Face was much impressed by the report of this incident. The phenomenon of a stern warrior from the arid plains shedding tears on the shore of the ocean puzzled him, yet he was sure (so he said, at least) that if *he* saw it he would not weep. Long Dog, he said, was an old man and had acted foolishly, but *his* heart was strong. I did not fully realize, then, how keen had been his disappointment at not having been allowed to accompany the Sitting Bull party. When I was preparing to return to the East I understood it better, for Rain in the Face was very anxious that I should take him with me.

A thing which contributed largely to his discontent was that he had a wounded, crippled knee. This did not prevent his riding, but when he dismounted he was forced to hop on his good foot, and this he would only do for short distances. He had a pair of rude crutches but preferred not to use them.

There were two explanations of how he came by this wound—his own, and that of other Indians who were not in sympathy with him. According to his account he was invulnerable, that is to say, I suppose, invulnerable to the missiles of enemies, for he told me that while he was running buffalo his horse had tripped and stumbled in a shallow washout, that the jolt had thrown down his pistol hand, and the weapon had been discharged into his knee. This type of accident was so common that I have never seen any reason to doubt his story, though others said he had been wounded in a fight with the Rees. He must have received this wound between the time of the Custer battle and his surrender, probably about 1880, certainly not in the Custer fight, as some have contended.

On account of his lameness he had lost prestige among his own people, but he knew he was still an object of interest to the whites, that strange race who while believing the tales of his horrid deeds were willing to treat him as a friend, shaking his hand and gazing in his face, while marveling at the mildness of his expression. Still, at times, he was much depressed by the thought of his lost standing, and would contemplate the commission of some desperate deed to win it back.

The agent, Major McLaughlin, had a tame buffalo cow which ran loose about the agency. One day as Rain in the Face sat in my room, gazing out of the window, his eye rested on the agent's tame buffalo, and remarking that it was fat and in good condition, and its robe prime, he added he had been thinking he would drive it off and kill it. The agent then would be angry, and would send for him to answer for what he had done. He (Rain in the Face) would have a gun under his blanket—not a short gun (a pistol), but a rifle—and when the agent "talked bad" he would kill him and make his escape to the Crows. His reason for this was that his heart was poor. He was sad and despondent. He was lame, and could not take part in the dances and other ceremonies, and the agent did not like him; he had refused to let him go with the Sitting Bull party to the East.

It would have been useless to try to persuade him that such an act would be "wrong." According to his way of reasoning it could only be wrong, bad (for him), if he failed; if successful it would be right. Therefore, I argued that it would be foolish and almost certain to fail. First, he would probably be killed or captured in the attempt, but even if he succeeded in getting as far as the Crows he could not be sure they would not kill him, or, more likely, deliver him up to the authorities, for he had killed many of them and had long been their enemy. To this he answered that the Crows were now friendly to the Sioux,

and unfriendly to the whites, and this was true at the time, but only in a limited sense. Even so, I told him, the "wire on the poles" (the telephone had only recently been built connecting the agency and fort with the telegraph line at Mandan on the Northern Pacific) would tell about it, and the soldiers in the Crow country would know it long before he could get there, and (this was a cruel thrust, but effective) would be looking for a lame Indian. I also spoke of hanging, which he knew was the white man's punishment for killing white men. He had heard of it when he was a prisoner at Fort Lincoln.

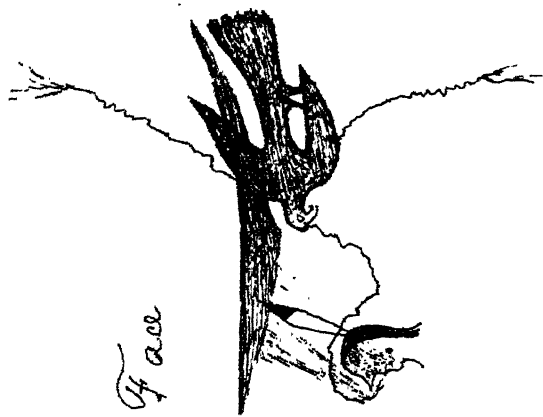
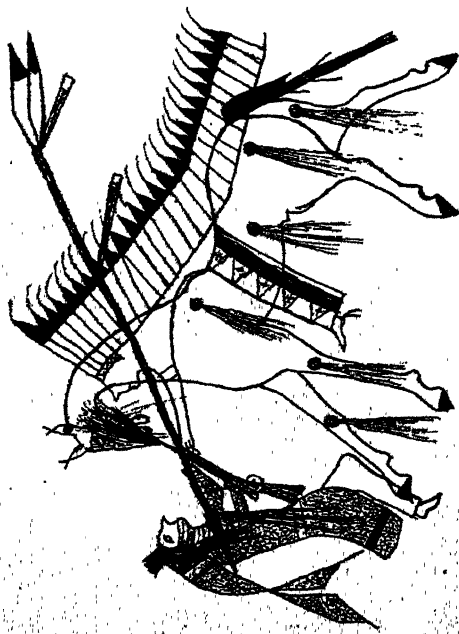
The affair as he imagined it was to be a partial repetition of the series of events which first brought him notoriety among the whites, a sort of return to the stage after a period of retirement. First a sensational killing, then, following the route of his famous escape of a decade earlier, a dash for the Big Horn country, where he would find asylum, not, as on the former occasion, among his own people, but with their enemies who now occupied that region; but he had failed to take into account the changed conditions. Now there was the telltale wire, his stiffened knee, and there, where the Big Horn and the Greasy Grass flow together, Fort Custer, full of white soldiers, though, to be exact, some of these were black, "black white men" [*Mastci'-de ca-pit'-te*], as the Crows call them. Though he refused to yield the point, and continued to argue doggedly in a spirit of bravado, it was easy to see that the mention of all these drawbacks had had its effect, and, concluding that the agent was in no immediate danger, I did not report the matter to him. Twenty-two years afterward, in New York, I told the Major about it. He looked at me with his keen gray eye, but made no comment.

In April, 1887, a poem by John Greenleaf Whittier, "On the Big Horn," appearing in the *Atlantic Monthly*, announced the fact that Rain in the Face wanted to go to school, though the newspapers stated that for various



Iro-ma Ga-ju, Rain in the Face. Portrait study by DeCost Smith, from life, Grand River, S. D., August 8, 1890.

Rain in the Face



Drawings by Rain in the Face, 1885

Left: Rain in the Face spears a Crow. Right: Pictograph signature of Rain in the Face. Above: Rain in the Face's autograph
—white man style.

reasons (among others that it would cost about \$230 annually for his maintenance) the government authorities were unwilling to send him to Hampton Institute, where he wished to go. The poem consisted of nine stanzas, but the first four, here quoted, are sufficient to convey the spirit of its stirring appeal:

The years are but half a score,
And the war-whoop sounds no more
 With the blast of bugles, where
Straight into a slaughter pen,
With his doomed three hundred men,
 Rode the chief with the yellow hair.

O Hampton, down by the sea!
What voice is beseeching thee
 For the scholar's lowliest place?
Can this be the voice of him
Who fought on the Big Horn's rim?
 Can this be Rain-in-the-Face?

His war paint is washed away
His hands have forgotten to slay;
 He seeks for himself and his race
The arts of peace and the lore
That gives to the skilled hand more
 Than the spoils of war and chase.

O chief of Christ-like school!
Can the zeal of thy heart grow cool
 When the victor scarred with fight
Like a child of thy guidance craves,
And the faces of hunter braves
 Are turning to thee for light.

A stirring appeal, I repeat. Many were moved by it, and even I who knew Rain in the Face, and perhaps should have understood him better, assumed that he was sincere in his desire for an education. Writing to my father about it, I must have expressed my views rather earnestly, for he caught the enthusiasm and wrote both to General S. C. Armstrong, at Hampton, and Captain R. H. Pratt, at

Carlisle, which resulted in a fairly voluminous correspondence leading to the final conclusion that what Rain in the Face really wished to do was to see the East, to verify with his own eyes the wonders related on their return by Sitting Bull and his companions, and as these Indians had been exhibited for an admission fee in the Eden Musée, and elsewhere, the laudable ambition of Rain in the Face resolved itself, in the last analysis, into a desire to join a show.

In a letter of July 2, 1887, from Miss Mary C. Collins (a missionary of extended experience with these Indians) to General Armstrong, the writer says:

Rain in the face so far as I know is doing as well as we could expect him to do under the circumstances. . . . He is a pleasant faced, pleasant spoken man, gentle and refined in manner. He does not seem to be over thirty-five years old, though he may be forty. Now as to his going to Hampton. If he goes with a purpose to learn farming and carpenter work mainly I should say he would get good and do good. I do not feel competent to advise. However if you come out I will offer my services as interpreter . . . and we can talk with him face to face. . . .

Another letter, also to General Armstrong, was from the agent, Major James McLaughlin, and was dated Standing Rock Agency, Fort Yates, D. T., June 15, 1887. The part referring to Rain in the Face, comprising the greater portion, is as follows:

Yours of the 31st ultima and 1st inst., respectively, relative to "Rain in the Face," were duly received, and in reply would state that I doubt if he could be induced to remain at any school, as after expressing such a strong desire to accompany Mr. McDowell's Hampton party, last summer, he stated afterwards that he did not intend to remain at the school, but only wished to go with the party so that he might thus have an opportunity of seeing how eastern schools were conducted, (an inspector as it were) and more particularly the eastern cities of which he has heard so much. He has been importuning me for the past year to try and have some showman or museum engage him for exhibition and is exceedingly anxious to go on such a tour,

as he is a little vain and somewhat inflated with his own importance. He is about 40 years old and is not thirsting for knowledge nor the desire to become a white man, but is otherwise well disposed. He is not a bad man in any sense, but on the contrary is rather intelligent, only inclined to be self-willed and a little obstinate. He was at one time a brave warrior of his tribe, but was never recognized as a chief of any prominence among his people and his present crippled condition leaves him without any following or influence among the Sioux. . . .

Later on I was convinced from my own observations that Rain in the Face, with the best of intentions, could not have conformed to the discipline of an institution like Hampton. It would have been too much to expect of one whose point of view and philosophy—already formed—were essentially, and necessarily those of the primitive man.

While camped with Flying By's band on Grand River I saw him less frequently than in the old days at Standing Rock, though we were but a few hundred yards apart, and he seemed more subdued and saddened. There were rumors that he and his wife were not happy together, though I saw nothing in their manner to indicate it.

She had been the widow of Crow Ghost, in her day a sprightly and attractive woman; he, with his reputation as a fighter, had naturally been a favorite with the Indian girls. More than that—youthful, good-looking "fiend incarnate," it was inevitable that he should attract some white woman, and fate decreed that this should be the daughter of a well-known man back East—at least sufficiently well known to have had a square named after him in one of our principal cities.

The infatuation had been noticeable enough to cause amused comment among the agency people, but from Rain in the Face's own unsolicited account it never got beyond a harmless exchange of endearments and caresses. The point is not important of course, except perhaps ethnologically, for there has been doubt, I believe, as to whether

kissing was a pre-Columbian custom. I learned from this that the Sioux had a word for it.

Now, in 1890, Rain in the Face and his wife were middle-aged, and both were proud and sensitive. She had been in poor health for some time, while he, eager as ever for that illusory fame always just beyond his reach, was hopelessly crippled, thwarted, gloomy.

These conditions had not made for harmony, and a few months before, in a fit of unreasoning jealousy, it was supposed, the wife had stabbed him. In the hospital at Fort Yates, where he was taken, knowing it was the strange custom of the white man to exact a penalty in such cases, and with the Indian's notion that a vicarious atonement would satisfy the requirements, the wounded Rain in the Face asked Major McLaughlin not to punish his wife for what she had done. If it was necessary for someone to pay the penalty he preferred to take the punishment himself, as he, perhaps, had been partly to blame, and, anyway, in her weak condition he did not think her entirely responsible.

In 1893, life had taken on a rosier aspect. The death of Sitting Bull had left him a clear field. Rain in the Face was once more the "fiend incarnate," "the slayer of General Custer," etc., etc., but why repeat? I found him in that year the *piece de résistance* in a side show on the Midway Plaisance, at the World's Fair, Chicago. Sitting Bull's house, if I remember correctly, formed part of the same "attraction." It was the log cabin in which Sitting Bull had lived the last years of his life, and in front of which he had been shot, this latter fact giving it its principal interest, a purely morbid one, those who looked closely being rewarded by the sight of a few bullet holes in the logs. Nevertheless, even in this depressing environment, Rain in the Face seemed bright and happy, for he had only recently embarked on his new career, and the charm of novelty had not yet worn off.

I stood near the back of the crowd of spectators. Like Zacchaeus, little of stature, my head did not rise quite to the general level, and at first he did not see me. Day by day, from his seat on the platform, he had gazed at thousands of people he did not know, had never seen before, but not a face escaped his scrutiny. In course of time, without seeming to look, he saw them all, and finally he saw mine—one face, at last, he knew. Eagerly, as if he feared I might vanish in the crowd, he raised himself in his chair, and to the surprise of the "lecturer"—a professional showman who knew no more of Rain in the Face than of me—thrust his hand high above his head and beckoned me to him.

One of his first questions was, "Are there melons in the stores?" I told him, "Yes," and later heard him asking through the interpreter, who turned out to be Mrs. Parkin, for a number of things which he felt needful for his happiness, and prominent in the list was *melons*.

He had now reached the City of the Lake [*Bû-le' o-ton'-we*] and probably had seen Lake Michigan, but this was not the ocean—the ocean was still far away. There was something yet to live for.

The next and last time I saw my friend was about eight years later at Coney Island. I had gone there with an acquaintance from out of town. A large sign, supplemented by the raucous "outside ballyho" of the "barker," announced that Rain in the Face was on exhibition within, but there was so much of the fraudulent mixed with a really surprising amount of the genuine in that sort of enterprise, that I did not believe it till I had verified it with my own eyes.

Rain in the Face was indeed there, but much changed; there was none of the bright smile, the animated expression of the eye. At the end of a row of Indians, none of whom I knew, seated at a table on which were writing materials, he was selling his autograph! The thing of all others he had condemned in Sitting Bull! While I was there he did

nothing but talk to me in a low tone, scarcely audible, about the battle on the Greasy Grass, where Long Hair was killed, but only in very general terms, as though the subject were entirely new to me, and not one we had discussed together in detail years before. Two well-dressed men crowded close in an effort to hear what he was saying, only to find that he spoke in a language they did not understand. One of them said, "Do you think that really is Rain in the Face?" Evidently he did not think so, and I could hardly blame him. His hero, the "fiend incarnate," was disillusioned, apathetic. Having seen the wonders of the white man's world— or so he thought—and the ocean, there were no more worlds to conquer. But he did not forget the main chance. Knowing I was already provided with his autograph, both whiteman style and Indian, he did not try to sell me one; he asked me for a dollar.

Fortunately it is possible to end this sketch of a notable character with some extracts from a letter of Miss Mary C. Collins, missionary to the Sioux, the same Miss Collins already mentioned. This letter was in reply to one I sent her asking for information. It adds a dramatic touch to the story of a life not devoid of historic interest.

. . . You refer to Rain in the Face. I remember very well when I tried to get Gen. Armstrong to take him in his school for a while, and I still think the Government made a mistake in refusing to let him go. If he had applied for the privilege of joining a wild west show, which could only degrade the Indian, he would have been permitted to go. [Major McLaughlin's letter, previously quoted, shows that for a time this permission was withheld.] I wanted him to see' how Christian people lived and worked. Poor Man! There was much good in him. One day when I was called to go ten miles to see a sick woman I was at Oak Creek Station without any team and thought I could not go. Rain in the Face came to me and offered to take me and was as kind and thoughtful for my comfort as any gentleman could be. I visited him once a week during the summer that he lay ill over in the Oak Creek Valley at his home where he died. He had someone watch for me and when I came down the Butte they would see me and tell him I was coming. Then he would have them lift his blanket near the tent

door where he could watch me coming. When I came in he always greeted me as his niece. I used to carry him something to eat, fruit or cookies, and would read the Bible to him and pray and sing with him. One day he laid his hand on the Bible and said "In this is my trust. God is merciful. God is merciful." I had frequently asked him when in health if he killed Custer with his own hand. He would answer "My niece there was so much smoke and dust we do not know, we could not see." Now he was near death and he took an old St. Louis paper from under his pillow which contained his picture and the story of his killing Custer. He said "I want you to have this." I took his hand as I knelt beside him and I said "Uncle will you now tell me the truth for the sake of history?" He said "What will they do to me?" I replied "They will not do anything to you. It was in war and the Government will not punish you now." He raised up on his elbows and looking earnestly in my face said, "Yes I killed him. I was so close to him that the powder from my gun blackened his face." The effort had been too much and he fell back to his pillow. I stayed awhile till he revived and then read to him "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow. Though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool." "God is of tender mercy." Then I said now be at Peace. You were only defending yourselves and all men may do that. I believe he told me the truth then. You would have believed it if you had seen him.

The greater part of this chapter was written before the receipt of Miss Collins' letter. There are passages in it which conflict with the later revelation, but I have decided not to change them. The reader may reconcile them in his own way, if he can, and reach his own verdict.



Old Henry

"A soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers,
There was lack of woman's nursing,
There was dearth of woman's tears."
Bingen on the Rhine—CAROLINE NORTON

IT MAY be said, without too great disregard for truth, that our final, decisive Indian wars were won by foreigners.

This is not to include the little, unrecorded "private wars," waged by American frontiersmen of varying types, trappers, hunters, prospectors, who drifted into the Indian country by ox team, afoot, or on horseback. Many of these took to themselves Indian women for lack of other, and learned much of Indian ways from them. Their safety depended on their own resourcefulness and the friendship of their wives' relations. Of necessity they became involved in the intertribal feuds, and in this school some grew to be excellent Indian fighters.

The commissioned officers of the army were American born, with few exceptions, but below that rank were all sorts—Bowery boys from Chatham Square, striplings from the farms of Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Ohio, but especially men from every country of Europe, most of whom, regardless of nationality, bore names suggesting Hibernian or Teutonic origins, for soldiers, like sailors,

were given to signing up under assumed names. The Germans had won the Franco-Prussian War; the capital of the new Territory was Bismarck, and the recent advent of spiked helmets for the infantry spoke eloquently of the prevailing admiration for things German, while the Irish had always borne a reputation as fighters; consequently Irish and German names prevailed.

There was a Frenchman who had served ten enlistments, part of the time, at least, under an Irish name which his accent shamelessly belied. He had run away from home at sixteen, had joined the California gold rush, and continued to wear a full-tufted black beard, fashionable enough in the days of the forty-niners but no longer so in the seventies, and eighties, not, at any rate, among enlisted men of the army. The mustache, yes; even mustache and modest imperial but full beard, except perhaps on campaigns—unthinkable!

On a tour of inspection General Miles took exception to it. "That man with a beard?" said he sternly. "Oh," explained the officer in charge, "that is our artificer. He is a privileged character." "Have him shaved," said the General.

Happening to know this man's real name and place of birth, I later met, thousands of miles away, his half-brother, who had not seen or heard of him for forty-five years. During this interval the old cavalryman had quartered the West from Mexico to the British line and from the Missouri to the Pacific; his adventures, real and imaginary, would have made a thick volume. He was utterly unreliable as to dates and numbers, but I was able to verify some of his statements. Others, though I could not vouch for them, had all the stark realism of truth—or a clever lie. I felt inclined to believe them.

During one of the earlier skirmishes with Apaches he had sighted an Indian hidden in a tree, who, with a rifle modern for those days, was doing considerable damage

among the dismounted soldiers beating through a brushy ravine. With a lucky shot in the head he killed the Indian. An older trooper stepped up and said, "Now, scalp him." The Frenchman, believing this to be routine procedure, with some difficulty loosened the edges of the scalp with his knife, grasped the hair, and pulled. To his surprise it clung tenaciously. "Give it a good yank," said his instructor. Heaving with boyish strength, the scalp tore suddenly loose, pieces of shattered skull adhering, spattering blood, brains, and matted hair into his wide eyes and gaping mouth. "I never scalped another Indian," he said.

Fifty and sixty years ago, so far as the average American was concerned—unless he chose a military career, and graduated from West Point—his sole connection with the regular army was to "spring to arms" whenever the honor or safety of the country was threatened. At other times the meager pay (thirteen dollars a month for the private soldier), with long periods of isolation at remote frontier posts, most of all, maybe, the abhorrent certainty of having to take orders from some man he considered no better than himself, held no lure for him.

With foreigners the case was different. Most of them had been trained to respect superior authority, many had passed their formative years in soldiering; it was a trade they knew, and it offered immediate employment until they could gain a footing in the new country. During their military service many lost touch with friends and relatives, some re-enlisted again and again, still neglecting to write home till their people no longer knew whether they were living or dead. In time their only friends were their comrades in arms, ignorant, often, of their true name and kinship, and their final resting place was a shallow grave on an Indian battleground, or in the little graveyard back of the post.

Frontier forts in those days, especially the more recently established, were not forts at all in the ordinary sense.

They were rather groups of buildings set around a hollow square, a flagstaff in the middle, a kind of blockhouse or bastion at one or more of the corners, barracks on one side, officers' row on the other, with hospital, post trader's store, and stables, variously distributed. The only fortification or stockade was a regulation white picket fence.

An ambitious young Indian might win a reputation for invulnerability by dashing across such a place, firing wildly as he rode, and out again unscathed, as Rain in the Face once did at one of the forts further east. Abercrombie or Totten, I don't know which, for he didn't know the English name for it. No matter, it was an empty boast, for to shoot at such a flying mark would be as dangerous to those on the side lines as to the rider.

Fort Yates was a garrison post of this description, on the west side of the Missouri, sixty miles below the Northern Pacific crossing. At various distances above and below it were camps of Indians, beaten and bewildered as to why they must be herded here on the reservation, idle, while in the miles of untenanted wilderness beyond hide-hunters were killing off their buffalo. Though crushed for the time being, they were regarded as still potentially dangerous, hence the fort standing ever threatening in their midst. Really, the danger lay in the presence of one man—Sitting Bull, after he was killed it did not take the government long to conclude that a special garrison to control them was no longer needed. The Indian police, under proper leadership, had proved loyal and competent, and there were other forts to be called upon in case of need.

For the soldiers (some troops of the Seventh Cavalry and a few companies of infantry), life was equally monotonous; beyond the routine of daily duties, quite unexciting. Except for little groups of congenial spirits here and there, there was little to bind together these men from all corners of the earth. Few among them felt they were their brother's keeper; the good Samaritan spirit scarcely

existed. The blacksmith announced one night that he had just heard some men calling for help down by the river. He didn't go down there; they might have been drowning; they may have been drunk. He didn't know who they were; it was none of his business.

For amusement there was the pool table and an occasional amateur minstrel show. The floating-hog ranch had been a rare, though not unknown phenomenon of the Missouri, drifting downstream with a few shopworn women who had overstayed their market in the Montana mining camps and were returning to the civilization from which, originally, they had emanated, but there were always the hurdy and other relatively permanent institutions of diversion across the river, which was as near as they could get to the Indian and military reserves. Here the monthly stipend could be spent quickly, and it was often the starting place for not infrequent desertions.

Immediately north of the fort, separated only by the white picket fence, was Standing Rock Agency. At the Northwest corner of the fort, ranged along the fence, was a long pile of cordwood as winter fuel and windbreak against the piercing blasts from that direction. Fifty yards from the east end of the woodpile a gap in the fence faced a log cabin which was the residence and place of business of Old Henry, barber by appointment or common consent, to both post and agency.

Henry was a respectable middle-aged German, ex-soldier of course, fairly tall, with the conventional mustache, toes diverging at the goose step forty-five degrees, and in consequence, with increasing weight, somewhat flatfooted.

The cabin was partitioned; at one end his living quarters, at the other the barbershop with its tilting chair and mirror, a few flyspecked Indian curios on the wall, and on the floor in one corner a rough box half-filled with tangled braids of black hair shorn from the heads of

Indians, but, in accordance with official policy, only from the best and the worst. The Indian policeman sacrificed his long hair on donning the uniform; a few individuals eager for the approval of agent or missionary gave up theirs more or less willingly. On the other hand, unfortunates who had been confined in the guardhouse for horse stealing, wife beating, or other misconduct, were forcibly cropped to shame them. Short hair, therefore, was either a badge of merit or a brand of infamy; in the absence of a policeman's uniform it was not easy to tell which.

As winter approached, the monotony of life grew more appalling, and was relieved mainly by the effort to keep from freezing. For weeks the thermometer ranged from twenty-five to thirty-eight below zero Fahrenheit, and the newcomers listened to old-timers' tales of forty and fifty below, and wondered when it would get really cold. Outdoors, if the wind was not too keen, as it usually was (and then it would go through the thickest and warmest clothes like a sieve), it was sometimes possible to generate a little warmth by violent exercise. Indoors was a never-ending struggle to keep the teeth from chattering. In bed the breath congealed, coating blankets and buffalo robes with frost, freezing mustache and eyelashes to the covers.

At the morning wash-up it was well to avoid wetting the hair; otherwise no comb could pass through it. Coffee froze in the saucer at breakfast, and during the day it was impossible to use ink or water colors.

Extensive bodily ablutions were out of the question. Graybacks (now, in polite society, called cooties) took possession. I was uncertain of their provenance, but my contacts were mostly with civilians and Indians, thus absolving the men in uniform. In common belief there was little hope of getting rid of these undesirable tenants. Boiling in soapsuds was said not to freeze them (though I doubt it) and a period of freezing only made them more

vigorous (which is possible). I burnt up one five-dollar set of heavy flannels, but this ruinous procedure could not continue, so I hit upon a simple and effective expedient—my own invention, as far as I know.

On stripping to the buff, I found that the invaders came off with the flannels, and clung to the seams. A few sulphur matches, such as were then in use, passed flaming along the seams, fumigated both adults and nits into the repose of death.

The discomfort of interminable cold was comparable to that I once experienced in being wet to the skin day and night for a fortnight during the rainy season in the Olympic Mountains. Then, by some miracle, there came a day of warm sunshine, and it was possible to dry out. I realized then for the first time what unutterable joy it was merely to be dry.

With the increasing cold the timber in the river bottom above the fort and the curiously shaped Barn Butte, out in the plains to the west, were blurred and hazy through the mist of ice crystals which filled the air, and the dull, brassy parhelion on either side of the sun was a daily spectacle.

Sam Bruyère,* the tall mixed-blood—brother of the more famous Johnny—came in from the agency beef herd, held out near the heads of Grand River, his face black blotched with freezing, to report that many of the cattle were clattering on frozen hoofs, and the big, gray buffalo wolves, bolder than he had ever known them before, were dogging them expectantly.

Then came Christmas, sad enough always for men who have a home, and they away from it; less so, maybe, for those who have none. Except for two or three of the steady stand-bys the agency mess house was deserted. Outside little life was stirring; the weather kept even the Indians in their camps. Somewhere, of course, there was merriment

* Spelled in a variety of ways. I have spelled it as it was pronounced.

of the synthetic kind. A clerk from the trader's store grew too merry, fired joy shots through the ceiling, one of which raked the arm of a man lying in bed on the floor above, but this was across the river; I did not see it, and from these events I felt remote.

I had been importuned to cross the mile of windswept ice and sand bars to bring back a supply of whiskey, but declined. Nothing of the kind was permitted on either reservation, yet there were rumors of celebrations on our side of the river, too, but these were in groups of two or three, and in discreet privacy. Treacy, veterinary of Custer's old regiment, celebrated with Sam Bruyère. Old Jimmy—but why enumerate? Old Henry was not seen for days. No one wondered at it; in due time he would be back again, his dignified presence efficient as ever behind his red plush chair.

Early one morning an Indian policeman, passing by, noticed that the barbershop window was smashed in. Bare feet had wandered, aimlessly it seemed, in the snow around the cabin and between it and the long woodpile beyond the fort fence. In and about the tracks were frozen globules of blood-soaked snow. A glance through the window showed Henry, partly dressed, barefoot, face down on the floor near the barber's chair. His hands, weaving with an incessant swimming motion across the rough-sawed planks, had worn the knuckles to the bone. The door was closed; locked. There was no fire in the stove, the house had been without heat for days, and the cold was as great inside as out. Henry, mercifully unconscious, was frozen from the hips down.

The following night four or five old soldiers, all Germans, sat in the living quarters waiting. On the rough table the feeble rays of a smoky lamp cast grotesque shadows of the silent watchers in their buffalo coats and muskrat caps up and across the cotton sheeting covering walls and ceiling. It once had been unbleached, but dust

and smoke had subdued it to a leaden gray, relieved in spots by streaky stains edged rusty brown, where the cloudbursts of spring and autumn had pelted between the chinks and washed the mud daubing down the walls. Here and there overhead, the cloth sagged pointedly under the weight of heavier lumps fallen from the dirt roof, and caught by the cloth.

A perfunctory fire in the box stove served, with the animal warmth of the huddled soldiers and the heat of the lamp, to raise the temperature somewhat above zero, possibly, but not much, for the door was left open into the unheated barber shop, where Henry still lay, now decently turned face up, his arms continuing their rhythmical motion as when he was first found. This room was kept unheated purposely, lest the frozen man should thaw out.

At long intervals a moan or a few incoherent words would come from the cold, dark room. One of the watchers would step quickly, and kneel at Henry's side, listening, his ear close, hoping, who knows?—perhaps for some last message to friends back home. "*Was sagst du, Heinrich?*" No answer. Henry was beyond answering. He died that night.

His belongings were easily distributed; they were not many; I fell heir to his Indian things. During the remainder of the winter there were rumors that Henry had been seen at the woodpile. Henry alive had been known and liked by all; Henry dead of cold was another matter; sentries on bitter nights did not like that end of their beat.

Half a century has passed. The vast Territory has long been divided into two states. The Standing Rock stands, if it still stands, on an artificial pedestal of questionable taste; the Laramie treaty of 1868, Magna Charta of the Red Tribes, "abrogated," Indian lands "bought" for a

pittance, buffalo grass plowed under, soil scattered to the four winds. Sitting Bull and Old Henry, all enmities sublimated and transmuted by the alchemy of kindly Mother Earth, lie side by side near an abandoned fort, wondering, if ghosts can wonder, what it was all about.



The Massacre on Birch Creek

THE trail around the points of the mountains from Lost River to Birch Creek is long and dusty, and in summer it is hot.

Albert Lyon no doubt found it so one day near the middle of August, 1877, as he left the edge of the desert where these mountain streams sink and the dry winds lap up all moisture, and turned his course up the broad valley of Birch Creek in search of horses which had strayed away from the stage station on Antelope, near the head of Big Lost River. Yet for those in sympathy with such scenes the region does not lack beauty. Indeed, it is full of charm—mountains on the north, the desert expanse to the south, rabbits, sage hens, eagles, coyotes, and, far out on the flat, antelope glimmering in the wavy atmosphere. Then too there is the mirage which often distorts the outlines of the great buttes to the south and west, or, more rarely, reflects the inverted image of the Tetons in the Eastern sky—but in order to understand what befell Albert Lyon and others on that August day it is necessary to take, in imagination, a long step from the desert's edge in Southeastern Idaho to the Big Hole in Western Montana.

At this latter point, Joseph and his Nez Perces, fleeing from General Howard's troops, were attacked by General Gibbon, and on August 9 and 10 received a severe check at



Albert Edward Lyon, only white survivor of Birch Creek Massacre,
1887.

his hands. General Gibbon never claimed a victory, and someone has aptly said that both sides were whipped. At any rate, the Nez Perces lost heavily and were much embittered, if not discouraged, by the outcome. The fact that some of the Bannacks under Buffalo Horn, acting as army scouts, had scalped several of the Nez Perce dead tended not a little to increase this resentment. General Howard was in no wise to blame for the action of these scouts and was very indignant, giving strict orders, and taking precautions that nothing of the kind should occur in the future. Up to this time the gentle art of scalping, though discountenanced and usually forbidden by the officers, had been practiced more or less surreptitiously by Indian scouts and allies, and sometimes too, it must be admitted, by white men, but owing in part to Howard's attitude toward it, and the good example set by Chief Joseph throughout his campaign, it lost much of its vogue, though occasional scalping continued till 1880 or later.

Joseph's plan had been to cross to the buffalo country east of the mountains, and, following the tactics of Sitting Bull the year before, eventually to evade pursuit by getting into British territory, but General Gibbon's engagement and the arrival of General Howard's command, forced him to swing to the south and back again to the west of the continental divide. Thus thwarted in their intention, and irritated by their losses and the barbarous treatment of their dead, it is easy to see that as they swept in their retreat down Bloody Dick, across Trail Creek, and through Horse Prairie, these Indians were in no friendly mood toward the white race, and as a natural result several noncombatants were killed, Farnsworth, James Smith, Montague, and Flynn among the number.

At the Phil Sheenan ranch, Andy Myers (who later lived on Squaw Creek, over the range east of Birch Creek) was attacked with two others, and he alone escaped by hiding in the thick willows.

At the old Hamilton ranch, on Horse Prairie, the Nez Perces shouted a defiant invitation to those within to come out and talk. Hamilton stayed in the house, but a man named Cooper, confident in his knowledge of Indian character and moved either by curiosity or bravado, went out. They blew his head off.

None of these men were scalped, stripped, or in any way mutilated except by the shots that killed them. Some had watches and considerable sums of money about them, but the Indians took nothing but their lives, leaving them where they lay after covering their bodies with blankets, which according to savage custom was equivalent to honorable burial on the field of battle.

From Horse Prairie the main body of Nez Perces continued westward over the divide into Idaho, striking the Lemhi at the Junction, though a strong detachment of their fighting men had already crossed by the Lemhi Pass farther north, in the vain hope of enlisting the Lemhis in their cause. These Shoshones, the friends of Lewis and Clark, had occupied the valley as far back as our history goes, and with the single exception of their bloodless expulsion of the Mormons, who built Fort Lemhi in the early "fifties," their conduct had always been friendly toward the whites.

The next settlers who came to the valley (1855) developed the industry of dairy farming, and making butter, which in ten- and twenty-pound cans, tightly soldered, found ready market in the mining camps of Western Montana, such as Bannock and Virginia City. With these people the Shoshones had no quarrel. They even worked for them by spells, and Tendoy, their chief, set the example by milking cows for a time on a similar ranch owned by his brother-in-law, Courtois, in the Flathead country. So it came to pass that nothing bothered the butter makers except the grizzlies that sometimes killed a cow, or the wolves and mountain lions that ate their colts and calves,

and already in 1877 some of them were "well fixed." The Shoshones had come to like and respect them, and so the Nez Perces coaxed and bullied in vain,—Tendoy and his people were at peace with their neighbors and would not fight them. Not only so, but gathering together a band of picked warriors, he joined forces with Colonel George L. Shoup (storekeeper and leading citizen of Salmon City, afterwards U.S. Senator from Idaho), and hurried to the protection of the settlers on the upper Lemhi. A stockade was hastily built just below the Junction, and when the main body of the hostile Sahaptin came out upon the plain from the pass above, they hastened to make a treaty, agreeing, if unmolested, to go up and out of the valley without injuring the inhabitants in person or property.

So, after fortifying the canyon above Purcell's, on the west side of the valley, and passing one or more nights there, the enemy crossed over the divide toward the springs of Birch Creek, having made good their promise to commit no depredations in the Lemhi; however Shoup and his volunteers, and Tendoy and his warriors, followed in their wake to see them safely out of the country. (For this service in protecting the settlers of Lemhi Tendoy was awarded a life pension by special act of Congress, and at his death these same settlers, or their sons and grandsons, set up a seven-hundred-dollar monument at his grave.)

The straggling line of hostiles was now strung out for many miles, with strong scouting parties on front and flanks, but with the principal body of fighting men in the rear, the point at which the greatest danger of attack by pursuing troops was feared, and, to check such pursuit, rifle pits were built with loose rocks in the face of the lava cliffs at the Narrows of Birch Creek, and a rough wall of the same material was thrown across the defile, though it did not become necessary to use them.

Now, having followed the Nez Perces southward to the Narrows of Birch Creek, let us return to Albert Lyon,

who, it will be recalled, had turned his back upon the "sinks" of that stream and was now riding up the valley northward, as if to meet the Indians, who, let us not forget, though conducting a campaign humane beyond all precedent in the history of similar warfare, were in exceedingly bad humor.

Lyon, if he knew anything at all of this, had doubtless heard vaguely that there was an uprising of Nez Percés in the north, but the fact that his only armament consisted of an absurd four-barrelled revolving derringer, or "pepperbox," would indicate that he considered danger from that, or any other source, extremely remote. As he rode, his dog followed listlessly at his side, roused only to momentary interest in his surroundings when a jack rabbit scurried from the shelter of the sagebrush, or a bunch of sage hens moved in slow, trancelike walk across the trail on their way to water, for he had now reached the freight road which parallels the creek, and from the tracks in the dust it was evident that several wagons had passed, quite recently, going up. Lyon decided to follow and overtake them, for loaded as they were they had to travel slowly.

A short, brisk ride brought him to where the freighters had stopped for noon—for freighters they proved to be—Al Combs, Jim Hayden, and Al Green, hauling from Corinne, on the Union Pacific, in Utah, to Salmon City, Idaho. Most of their load was what might be termed general merchandise, having in mind the varied needs of such frontier emporiums as Shoup's general store, Phillips and McNutt's, and the little cooky shop of the two Chinamen (one of them a "doctor") who accompanied the train as passengers. There were groceries and canned goods of every description, window sash and glass, and *unfortunately* (as future developments will show) several barrels of whiskey, not intended for the use of Indians on the war-path, but for the trappers and mountaineers, booted miners and prospecters, and those who can best be described as the

young fellows with buckskin-foxed "pants," who frequented that mountain metropolis.

The outfit was what might be called "fast freight"; not the slow-moving wagon trains of eight or ten yoke of oxen, but four or five teams of horses, the driver riding the high "wheeler," and guiding the whole with a "jerk line." Where the going was good such an outfit might—I hesitate to say it—make as much as three miles an hour, but the day's drive was rarely more than twenty miles. Often it was necessary to make dry camps, and for this reason water was carried in a barrel slung on the side of one of the wagons.

At that period it was no uncommon thing, nor is it even now, for men without other means of transportation to arrange with freighters to carry their bedding and belongings to some point on the route which they wished to reach, while they themselves either rode in the wagons, or walked, sharing the freighters' mess, and paying a certain sum for the accommodation. Two such travelers were with this party, but who they were will probably never be known, for Lyon was not with them long enough to find out. The Chinamen, if they heard their names, could not pronounce them, and Hayden, Combs, and Green can never tell.

After the noon rest, the wagons started on once more, and Lyon, tying his horse to one of them, got in and rode.

The writer knows from experience the sensations of those who travel up Birch Creek with freighters in August. The dry heat, the monotonous tinkle of trace chains, the measured flopping of equine ears and rhythmical beat of hoofs, have a decidedly soporific effect, though the unexpected sudden jolt or the occasional whirl of a rattlesnake tends to keep one partly awake. That these men of 1877 experienced like sensations we do not know, but it is certain they had no suspicion of impending disaster even when, on rounding a brushy bend of the creek, a well-

armed and mounted party of Nez Perces, led by the chief Looking Glass, dashed swiftly out to bar their further progress.

Unfriendly as this demonstration must have seemed to the freighters, they were not greatly alarmed at it. They had been used to friendly Indians, or, at most, to those who though insolent and overbearing at times, were not actively hostile, and never, even at their worst, as much to be feared as the lawless element among the whites. A few presents, the freighters thought, would purchase them immunity from serious molestation, and the first questions the Indians asked seemed to confirm this opinion, for when they learned what the wagons contained they were overjoyed at the prospect of helping themselves to such valuable supplies.

Ordering the freighters to continue up the creek, their captors rode with them, peering into the wagons where they could, and discussing among themselves their probable contents. There was a small cask lying in plain view in the front of one of the wagons. They were not long in discovering it, and from that moment, if indeed there had been any doubt about it before, the fate of this handful of whites was sealed.

Recognizing the importance of the crisis, if not its full significance, Hayden, who seems to have been the boss or leader of the freighters, conceived the idea of offering this cask of whiskey to the Indians as a gift, and with apparent willingness helped them to open it, thinking thereby to gain their good will. Really, he had little choice in the matter; he would have gained nothing by refusing.

After drinking heartily, an advance was again ordered, but as the wagons were met from time to time by other parties of Indians, they as often had to be halted in order that the newcomers might sample the beverage. At length they reached the main Indian camp at a point about seventeen miles above the sinks. Here they were forced to

stop; the teams were unhitched, and the freighters disarmed, and the Indians began to plunder the wagons.

Lyon had his pistol hidden in one of his leggings, but managed to remove it and hide it inside his shirt. The men were not tied or closely guarded, and it seemed that up to this time there was no definite intention of killing them or holding them prisoners. On the contrary, they were allowed to sit or stand around as they chose, while the Nez Percés unloaded the wagons and distributed the goods, smashing the window glass and demolishing such articles as they did not want or could not use, while the whiskey, of course, was consumed in generous quantities, so that as the afternoon advanced the scene may be better imagined than described.

One of the Chinese storekeepers was so distressed at the pillaging of his wares, that, although advised to remain silent, he insisted on protesting, with the result that the Indians pounced upon both orientals, and with a vigorous application of the quirt, and using their queues as reins, rode them about the camp like horses, to the great delight of all save the Chinamen themselves, and possibly the whites who by this time were beginning to take a more serious view of what was happening.

Some men, it is said, have no fear; others do not recognize danger in unfamiliar forms. Albert Lyon was no coward. He was a veteran of the Civil War, and presumably a man of at least average courage, but he had not in this case the responsibility of protecting property entrusted to his care, as had the freighters. He was, in fact, under no obligation to remain, and he pointed out to the others that it was high time to escape, if possible. Hayden, who was a man of determination, tall, and of prodigious strength, could not, even now, see any real danger in the situation, and simply laughed at the suggestion, saying that he had been used to Indians all his life and knew how to manage them, but this did not reassure Lyon; he had

formed his plans and only awaited the chance to put them into execution.

Meanwhile the whiskey circulated. The hilarious confusion increased. The squaws were mostly busy taking what they wished or could carry to their respective family groups. New arrivals were constantly straggling into camp from above, only to go wild when the condition of affairs was revealed to them. Pandemonium reigned, and Lyon thought he saw his opportunity. Walking slowly, and as though aimlessly, he gradually succeeded in working his way up the creek almost to the outskirts of the camp, but here there was less confusion, less flow of animal and alcoholic spirits, and his movements were noticed by an old Nez Perce who approached him, and, calmly taking him by the arm, led him back. This was disheartening, for he felt he had lost precious time, and his captors would now be more watchful, yet he did not lose hope, and as the wild scene continued he tried to wait patiently. At last, as the sun disappeared behind the western mountains, he made his second attempt.

This time, unmolested, he moved as before up the valley, and had again nearly reached the camp's edge, when to his dismay he saw a group of Indian women riding toward him. For a moment he thought rapidly. What was to be done? They had certainly seen him, and any attempt to avoid them, or hide, would at once arouse their suspicion. Considering rightly that as they were new arrivals they probably knew nothing of the riotous doings in camp, and so might pass him unnoticed, he continued to saunter toward them, and much to his relief they passed him with scarcely a glance—except one—a bright, comely girl, who reined in her pony, and with a smile which disclosed her fine white teeth, held out her hand, and spoke to him in English. What could it mean? This girl so unlike her sisters that she would stop and exchange a friendly greeting with a stranger of a race with whom her own was at war!

Strange, he thought, for a young Indian woman under any circumstances, but though fearing the delay might prove his undoing, he answered her simple questions in the spirit in which they were meant, until, with the same frank smile, and the parting words, "My name is Mary. I've been baptized," she put whip to her horse, and galloped after the rest. It seemed a good omen.

A few minutes after this, deciding that his movements were not attracting attention, Lyon stepped into the willows and red birches which lined the creek, and watching his opportunity, waded across to the west side, where he wormed his way downstream to a point at which, though almost in the center of the camp (which occupied both sides of the stream) and directly opposite the wagons, the brush was most extensive and offered the best cover. Crawling under a mass of dead willows which had been bent down by the winter snows till they were well-nigh impenetrable, he disposed himself as best he could to wear out the long hours which must pass before the camp should finally drink itself into stupor.

Though his position was cramped and painful enough, his fear became less as the darkness increased, but later it seemed that his absence had been noted. The Indians were running in every direction through the brush, calling excitedly to one another. Time and again they passed within a few feet of his hiding place, but the fates were kind to him; they did not find him. At last they seemed to give up the search, and the uproar shifted to the vicinity of the wagons. Listening intently, he could hear the sound of running, jumping, scuffling, of confused outcries in English and Indian, the sound of blows, fierce oaths suddenly smothered, the muffled fall of heavy bodies. The freighters were defending their lives with their loaded whips, with neck yokes and singletrees hastily snatched up, and with their naked fists, against the axes, knives, and clubs of their assailants. Not a shot was fired except when

Lyon heard the rapid hoofbeats of a horse as it dashed up the valley followed instantly by others—then shots, several of them, growing more and more distant, and at last the sound of riders returning.

At midnight, or it may have been later, Lyon left his brushy retreat, and, crawling the first three miles for the most part flat on his belly, reached the timber on the mountainsides to the west as the day was breaking. He was now about eight miles from the camp, and though in little danger of pursuit he was so unnerved by the horrors of the night that he had no heart to continue his flight, but lay there in hiding several days. Then, working his way southward to the end of the range, he took to the flat country, and continued westward, suffering cruelly from fatigue, hunger, and thirst. For three days and a half he was without water, and for seven days without food, except a rabbit he killed with his pistol.

There were then no settlers on Birch Creek, nor any on the route he followed to the sinks of Big Lost River, but near the latter place he saw some cattle. They were so wild he could not get near them, but in sheer desperation he emptied his "pepperbox" at them, of course with no apparent result. Later he crawled inside the dried-up carcass of a horse to pass the night, and made a vain attempt to swallow some parings from its hide. Grasshoppers he also tried to eat, but they made him sick, and as he could find nothing else that was edible he tried chewing his belt, and in the end consumed about half of it. His dog, which might have served him now as food, was not with him. He had not seen it since he left the wagons; why, he did not know. Possibly some squaw might have taken possession of it, and probably this was fortunate, as the presence of the animal would have hampered his escape.

At length, when almost completely exhausted he was making his way up Big Lost River, he saw a bunch of

horses. They were none of them very wild, and luckily there was among them a very gentle old bell mare which he succeeded in catching and mounting, and thus he rode, more dead than alive, into Antelope station, to food, safety, and friends.

When the soldiers came to Birch Creek they found signs of a large Indian camp, the charred remains of wagons, quantities of canned goods, unsoldered by the heat, and broken window glass strewn the ground. They also found, and buried where they fell, the bodies of Hayden, Combs, and Green, and the two unknown, one of the latter a mile up the creek. The gigantic Hayden had evidently made a heroic resistance, his right hand being almost cut in two by the stroke of an enemy's knife which he had grasped in the encounter. None of the bodies was scalped.

The two Chinamen made their way to the upper Lemhi in such a distracted condition that they could give only an incoherent account of what had happened, but the settlers understood this much—the Indians had spared their lives. The bones of the unknown, who almost escaped, lie there yet, where the soldiers buried him (the people who came later to remove the remains to Salmon City for final burial did not find his grave), and probably today not more than one or two know his last resting place. For years it was the custom for passers-by to pile up loose stones in the center of the massacre ground, but as there were not many loose stones in the neighborhood, nor many passers-by, the cairn was never very large, and of late years the practice has been forgotten; the stones are scattered, and the cairn is indistinguishable. Now as you pass the spot you will find little trace of the rusty, flattened cans, but if you look closely you may see many shining bits of window glass.

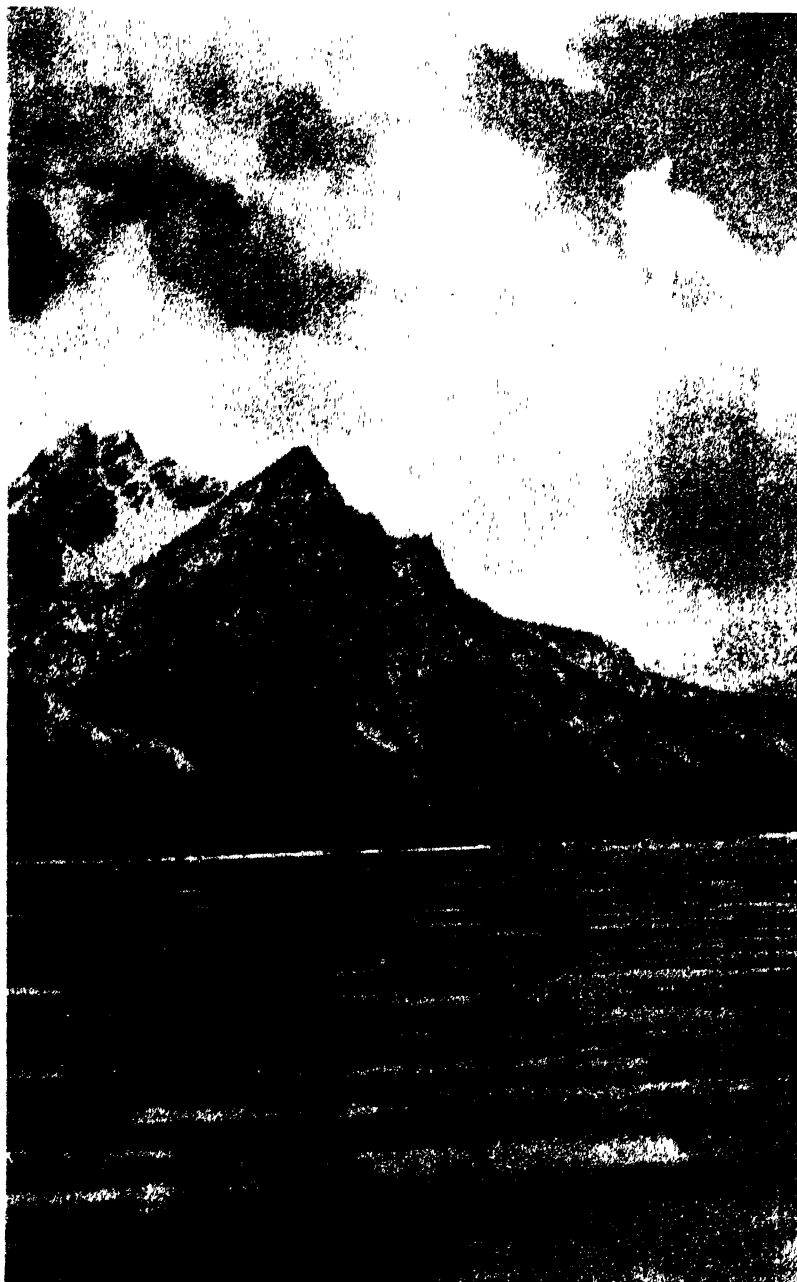
General Howard never received from the people at large, and of the West in particular, quite the credit due him for his part in the campaign. Fortune did not assign to him the spectacular role, yet his was a most difficult and necessary one.

First he fought these Indians on their own ground, giving and taking some of the hardest knocks when they were fresh and full of confidence. Then he began a tedious pursuit of the fleeing enemy, which became so discouraging, and apparently even hopeless at times—the pursued being often as much as one hundred and fifty miles ahead—that his own Indian scouts and citizen volunteers became demoralized. This was especially so after the night attack on the camp at Camas Meadows, in Idaho, when the Nez Perces “set him afoot” (*i.e.*, captured his mules). The conduct of the Bannack scouts was little short of mutinous, and some of the volunteers “went home.” It is known that the Bannacks stole horses from the wagon train, and it has even been asserted (with how much truth I cannot say) that certain “citizens” near what was then Taylor’s Ferry, on Snake River, appropriated some of the stock. These undisciplined auxiliaries seemed to conclude that the expedition had broken down, and therefore they might as well help themselves to the wreckage. But they were wrong in this, for though the Nez Perces, traveling light and with plenty of saddle animals, had an immense advantage over a mixed command encumbered by wagons, yet General Howard’s dogged pursuit through and over all kinds of obstacles, three times crossing the main range of the Rockies, eventually wore them down, so that when with the help of Sturgis and his cavalry (the seventh), they had been finally brought to bay at Bear Paw Mountain, they were in a condition of exhaustion, having covered a distance of over thirteen hundred miles.

However, there was still fight left in them when General Nelson A. Miles with fresh troops, after a rapid



Birch Creek freighter.



The Sawtooth Mountains, Idaho.

march from the mouth of Tongue River, surprised them in their stronghold, and with a sharp fight practically ended the campaign, though the Indians did not surrender until the arrival of Howard and Sturgis made further resistance hopeless.

A remarkable thing about the Nez Perce campaign is, that contrary to the rule in most Indian wars, the people of the West, except those who were direct sufferers, sympathized with the Indians. They realized that they were fighting for their rights. If Joseph, at times, captured white men and made them guide him through country he did not know, Howard, it was said, impressed into his service white scouts in Idaho, who "had not lost any Indians," and secretly hoped they might make good their escape. Some of these lukewarm adjuncts of the military were only held to the work by the promise of none too gentle punishment in case they failed.

In speaking of the Birch Creek horror I have heard people say, "It was the whiskey." However this may be, that affair, with some atrocious acts in the beginning of hostilities, and the killing of a number of noncombatants, will always count on the debit side of Joseph's record, yet on the whole the warfare waged by his Indians conformed to the rules laid down by civilized nations. Joseph knew this and was proud of it. Though Howard, after a fashion of his own, was one of his best friends, the Nez Perce chief, in the bitterness of defeat, could not refrain from taunting him.

It was at Bear Paw Mountain, Montana, in a parley before the surrender. Howard, stern Christian though he was—Bible in one hand, sword in the other—was also a humanitarian, and Joseph was well aware of it. The Nez Percés, too, deeply religious by nature, had followed the teachings of Christianity more or less consistently for nearly fifty years. The two leaders faced each other, one all but conquered, the other not quite the conqueror, and

both worn down by the hardships and worries of a long campaign. Joseph, proud to the last, unburdened his soul. Said he: "In all my fighting I have told my people there must be no scalping, no mutilation of the dead, and there has been none by us. But General Howard's men have scalped our dead. I had hoped General Howard would have done as well by me as I have done by him."

The following extract from a letter from General Howard, dated Burlington, Vermont, August 22, 1908, explains Joseph's reference to scalping:

Joseph, Chief of the Nez Perce was right. Some Bannock Indian scouts discovered where the Indians who fell in General Gibbon's attack were buried. The place was along the river not far from Big Hole, Mont. They dug up the bodies of many of these Nez Perces dead and took a few scalps. I was very indignant and did all I could at the time to prevent a repetition of the offense. . . .

I never knew of an instance in which Joseph's men scalped a white man or an Indian.

(signed)

OLIVER O. HOWARD,
Major General, U.S. Army,
Retired.

Note: Data for the foregoing account have been gathered from many sources. For years I was personally familiar with the region described and knew many of its inhabitants, both white and Indian. The names of men killed on Horse Prairie and vicinity are from an article in the *Butte Miner*, and I am especially indebted to General Howard; "Johnny" Bruyère, scout for General Miles; J. C. Anderson; W. A. Tyler; Mrs. W. A. Tyler, for information and an early photograph of Tendoy; H. C. Bucklin; Topompy Tendoy, Lemhi Shoshone chief, and B. H. Lyon, son of Albert Lyon (sole white survivor of the Birch Creek massacre).



Beyond the Lemhi Pass

THERE are sections of the West we have known so long and so intimately that, like old acquaintances, we seem always to have known them. Occupied, as they have been, or constantly traversed by white men from the time of their first discovery, we know their entire, unbroken history.

In general these are the regions which have furnished natural highways across the continent, easy mountain passes, chains of rivers, lakes, and portages like that from lower Canada up the Ottawa, and by way of Fort William and the Columbia to the Pacific, or by the Mackenzie to the Arctic; waterways like the Ohio, Mississippi, and Missouri; the deep-rutted road up the Platte and through South Pass; the great trade route to Santa Fe.

Through and over these passed military leaders, adventurers, missionaries, and merchants. Fairly early came the stagecoach and steamboat, bringing naturalist, artist, the princely traveler. Most of these kept journals, as their predecessors, the explorers and fur factors, had done, as well as some of the emigrants, and a few of the "White Chiefs" and trappers. Many of these wrote books and published them, while some, like Belden, Bonneville, and Beckwourth, told their experiences to others who wrote them down more or less understandingly and printed them.

In later years not a few of these old manuscripts have been rescued from oblivion, and let us hope there may be still others which remain to be discovered.

So much for the trodden paths, but what of those regions off the beaten trail, where canyon and peak, and entire mountain ranges, are nameless, or bear only such ephemeral local names as passing hunters or prospectors chose to give them? Some of these names have stuck, though many of the landmarks so christened have reverted long since to their primeval namelessness.

Owing to the lack of continuity of local history many of the streams and localities mentioned by the early explorers cannot now be identified with certainty. For example, Captain Bonneville's Godins River might be either Birch Creek, Little Lost River, or Big Lost River (probably one of the last two), but his description, as we have it through Irving, might well fit any one of them. Some of these regions may be said to have no history, not because there was a dearth of stirring events but because there was no one to record them. Nor does this mean, necessarily, that such areas were not early discovered, or that from the beginning they were not overrun, intermittently at least, by white men, but merely that few or none of them wrote down their experiences. These men were usually so engrossed in their search for beaver or gold, or by the daily struggle to preserve their lives, that they had no time, even if they had the ability or the inclination to write, and there were reasons, also, why some of them wished to keep their knowledge to themselves.

We recognized La Vérendrye, Jonathan Carver, Alexander Henry, Alexander Mackenzie, Lewis and Clark, and others as the first explorers of the Northwest because they left tangible records of their travels. La Vérendrye, it is true, was for a time regarded as an egregious liar because the tribes he claimed to have visited or whom he mentioned in his travels, could not be identified by the names he gave

them, but a little elementary knowledge of the native languages, since acquired, has shown that he told the truth. His was not an isolated case of the traveler discredited at first by those whose motto is, "*A beau mentir qui vient de loin.*" Of the multitude of secretive, elusive, or illiterate trappers, hunters, prospectors, who left no written record of their roaming we know, and can know, nothing except as they left behind them such material evidence as an ax, a fishhook, or a half-breed child. We may even be pardoned if, at times, we have our legitimate doubts whether the duly accredited first discovery was really the first.

Lewis and Clark (1805) found that the Shoshones had a name in their language for "white man," that they already possessed mules and Spanish bits, and a few small fuses. At the mouth of the Columbia (which was not so surprising) Captain Clark was greeted by an Indian who remarked to him in English that "Sturgeon is very good," but—more remarkable—Gabriel Franchere, near the same locality, in 1811, met "an old blind man" named Soto, "the son of a Spaniard who had been wrecked at the mouth of the river" (the Columbia), and had married a native woman. Assuming that this "old blind man" was seventy years old, this would indicate that the Spaniards, in all probability, were trading on this coast as early as 1740, more than fifty years before the river was "discovered" by Captain Gray in 1792.

De Smet tells us that shortly after the advent of the Astorians (1811), the French Canadians, and mixed-bloods—"bons catholiques, mauvais chrétiens," as the latter (like the Spanish) say laughingly of themselves—had gone through the country in all directions, "talking of God and religion, and of their priests, to the different savage tribes they visited." No wonder Bonneville, in 1833, found the Cayuses observing Sunday and showing other signs of Christian influence.

We do not know how early in the eighteenth century

traders had reached the upper Missouri country, but we do know that before 1750 French names had been invented or adapted for things typical of the far-Western plains. Not only are some of these terms unknown to present-day Frenchmen in France, but they are so old their original meaning is lost to most French-speaking mixed-bloods, and others, in America. *Parfleche*, or *pare-flèche*, is a word of this class. For nearly a hundred years it has meant little more than "rawhide," and, by extension, any receptacle or bag—especially a meat pack—made of that material. Maximilian, writing in 1833, gives the word its true meaning, *i.e.*, a "shield" (of rawhide, of course, hence the later derivative). The *parfleche* was a defense against arrows (*parer*, "to ward off," *flèche*, "arrow"), something to parry arrows, *qui pare les flèches*. It is a French compound, like *arrête-boeuf* or *chasse-mouches*; there are many such in the French language, yet curiously enough, the word has long been regarded as of unknown, or "doubtful origin."

In 1743 the Mandans told La Vérendrye that the Arickarees often ranged far to the south where they met white men (Spaniards, no doubt) who always went on horseback either for the hunt or war, and "*. . . 'lon ne pouvait point tués d'homme avec la fleche ny le fusille estant couvert de fer mais que tuant le cheval l'on a trapaît homme facilement ne pouvant courir, avoir des pare fleche de fer. . . .*" [*. . . one could not kill the man either with arrow or gun being covered with iron but killing the horse caught the man easily, not being able to run, having pare-fleche of iron. . . .*] This is significant as showing that a *parfleche* was a shield (or armor) no matter of what material it was made, and also that the Arickarees had guns prior to 1743.

And so it was, almost everywhere the aborigines showed knowledge of the white man, or of his inventions, before the first exploration of record.

There is a region in Idaho—the first west of the Rocky Mountains to be explored by authority of the United States Government in 1805—to which with trifling exceptions no further historic mention was made for another half-century, and which up to recent years has been more vaguely incorrectly mapped, perhaps, than any section of equal size within our borders. Bounded roughly by the Salmon River on the north, the main range of the Rockies on the east, the Snake River Desert to the south, and the Sawtooth Mountains on the west, it is comprised within a radius of somewhat less than two hundred miles as the crow flies, though one not gifted with flight would cover more ground than that in crossing it. The plunging white rapids of the Salmon, with its rocky gorges, conspired with the serrated crags of the Sawtooth to discourage intruders from the north and west. On the south the waterless desert, with its great buttes and cinder cones, its hummocks of black lava split and cracked in the process of cooling, lava fissures of unknown depth cleaving its surface for miles, was, if less appalling at first sight, no less forbidding, and though more accessible from the east and southeast, the approach, even here, was far from inviting to the first comers.

For the greater part of the last century little was known of the interior valleys, and as they average not far from six thousand feet in altitude there was no great inducement for the pioneers to make permanent settlements. The tide of emigration swept around, to the south mostly, and missionaries, prospectors, and miners came into the Nez Perce, Spokane, and Flathead territory to the west and north, and to the eastward, into what is now western Montana, but, on the whole, all this left the region in question undisturbed, if we are to judge from the lack of historic data concerning it. And yet it was the Lemhi Valley, at the Eastern edge of it, which was the first land west of the Rocky Mountains (within the limits of the United States)

ever seen by Anglo-Saxons coming from the east, overland.

That this should have been the first transmontane land-fall of Lewis and Clark was due to a series of accidents, or, if you will, was foreordained by the kindly fates which guide the uncertain steps of infants and explorers. Though the Lemhi Pass is one of the easiest across the main range, it led them toward a country which for them was all but impassable. Nevertheless, had they crossed the mountains by another pass, or under other circumstances, the success of the expedition, for that year at least, might have been very doubtful.

It so happened that a division of the northern Shoshone composed of Sheep Eaters (*mountain* sheep understood) and others had found the Lemhi and its neighboring valleys a pleasant, and comparatively safe, retreat from their enemies, the Blackfeet. Formerly, though ranging on both sides of the mountains, they had frequented more especially the country about the Three Forks of the Missouri, until the Blackfeet, obtaining guns from the Hudson's Bay Company, rendered it unsafe for them, and now they made only short excursions into it, or, joining forces with the Flatheads and Nez Percés, they sometimes penetrated the Eastern buffalo range as far as the Crow country, the Big Horn Mountains, and the North Platte.

Thus it was that in the year 1800 a party of these Shoshone were camped on the flat to the left of the Jefferson (as it was afterwards called in 1805), about a mile above its mouth. Here they were discovered by a war party of Hidatsa, or "Minnetarees of Knife River," from what is now North Dakota. These Indians, commonly called *Gros Ventres*, are for that reason often confused with the *Gros Ventres* of the Prairie, the Falls Indians, or *Atsina*, to whom they are in no way related. In the flight of the Shoshones, who were greatly outnumbered by the enemy, some young Shoshone girls were taken prisoners, two of whom, after being brought back to the earth lodges

of their captors, were purchased by a Frenchman, Tous-saint Charboneau, who had lived for years among the Minnetarees. When we consider the early age at which girls were often married among the Western tribes, and to white men who lived among them, and that Charboneau, as we are told, "brought up" these Shoshone captives, they must have been still young when, five years from the time of their capture, one or both of them had become his wives, and she who was known by the Hidatsa name, *Saca'gawea* [Bird Woman] had borne her first child. Probably at that time she was not more than seventeen.

It was little short of providential that Lewis and Clark, who had come up the Missouri and passed the winter of 1804-05 near the Mandans and Minnetaree, should have found this young woman there, and a further stroke of good luck that she happened to be married to a Frenchman rather than an Indian, for a Frenchman could be hired to go with them, and where he went his wife, or slave—for it was as a slave he had bought her—would also go. The route of the explorers, which they would resume in the spring, was to follow up the Missouri to its source, and, after crossing the "Rocky Mountains," descend the Columbia to the Pacific Ocean. Charboneau was engaged as interpreter, but it was upon his resolute young wife, Bird Woman, who was to act as Shoshone interpreter and guide across the mountains, that the hopes of the expedition really centered.

This girl could guide them to a pass in the great continental barrier, an easy pass, perhaps the only one she knew. Beyond it—somewhere—she had heard with the heedlessness of childhood—was the great river which flowed to the Western ocean, and best of all, beyond the pass lay her own country and her own people, who would be friendly to the whites (the *Daibo*) because she had come with them, would furnish them horses and point out the way. She may not have known that westward of the

Lemhi, in the most direct line toward the Columbia, the way was barred by ragged mountains and foaming rivers.

The summit of the Lemhi Pass was, up to twenty-five or thirty years ago, and probably still is, little changed from the day when Lewis and Clark crossed it. Often have I drunk from the "handsome bold creek of cold clear water running to the westward" where they "stopped to taste for the first time the waters of the Columbia." A few freight outfits and the daily stage from Red Rock to Salmon City and the Thunder Mountain diggings were all that disturbed the serenity of these mountain heights, the stage, which though often provided with an armed messenger was sometimes held up by road agents, but as a rule only when there was a shipment of gold dust aboard.

Where Drewyer shot, but failed to kill, an animal which "seemed to be of the fox kind, rather larger than the small wolf of the plains, and with a skin in which black, reddish brown, and yellow, were curiously intermixed" (a "skunk bear" or wolverine) one might see, a hundred years later, tracks of deer and mountain lion. One year, late in November, I crossed the pass on foot, and slept in the snow without a tent at the head of Horse Prairie (the "Shoshone Cove" of Lewis and Clark). The big gray wolves had come, and could be heard at night from my tent in Tendoy's camp on the Lemhi. On Horse Prairie I saw a man with five of them frozen stiff in his wagon. The "plain Indian road" of which Lewis and Clark speak, was still plain on the west side of the pass, for the going and coming of Indians for generations and the passing of loose stock had kept it fresh.

To repeat that Lewis and Clark first crossed the Continental Divide by the Lemhi Pass would seem superfluous did not experience show that this truth cannot be too often stated. As a matter of fact it is the only pass over the main Rocky Mountain range that was crossed by both these explorers. Notwithstanding the emphasizing of it



The Lemhi Pass, west slope. Here Lewis and Clark first crossed the Rocky Mountains on their way west in 1805.



Tendoy, The Climber, chief of the Lemhi Shoshones. Photo taken at Salmon City, Idaho, about 1883.



Daisy Tendoy, daughter of Topompy, granddaughter of Tendoy. She might serve as a model for Sacajawea. Photo, 1909.

by the better historians, and its frequent reiteration, there were, quite recently, people living on either side of the pass who could not be persuaded that Lewis and Clark were ever near it. Olin D. Wheeler* says:

"Of all these passes there were but three that Lewis and Clark both crossed and the only one across the main range that both of them saw and used was the first one—the so-called Lemhi Pass. This pass, therefore, should have been called and should, if possible, even yet be named the *Lewis and Clark Pass*."

Maybe the change has since been made, but an incident of forty or more years ago will illustrate the ignorance on this subject which then prevailed and in all probability still does. One day, at Red Rock, an unknown passenger climbed aboard the stage, alongside the driver, explaining that he wished to ride outside so that he could study the landmarks, as he was interested in tracing the route of Lewis and Clark. The driver of course "knew" that these explorers never had passed that way, but as his passenger insisted, and on the way spent much of his time consulting a funny little book and glancing from right to left, saying, "Yes, this is right," or "That is right," he began to doubt his sanity. But when, shortly after crossing the divide, the stage continued to rumble down the canyon instead of swinging through the low gap to the north, and the passenger, hurriedly looking in his book and glancing excitedly over his shoulder, exclaimed, "Hold on! This isn't right!" the driver no longer doubted.

At the ranch-store-stage station of "Charlie" Leib (I am not sure of the spelling) the stranger stopped for the night. Next morning, still talking of Lewis and Clark—to the amused bewilderment, now, of his host as well as the driver—he engaged a saddle horse, rode back into the hills, found the "plain Indian road," followed it through the gap to the "spring on the side of a mountain," and

* Wheeler, Olin D., *Trail of Lewis and Clark*, Putnams, New York and London: 1904.

returned triumphant. He had found just what the funny little book described, and the doubters were convinced he knew what he was talking about. This stranger's name was Elliott Coues.

Leib, who did considerable trading with the Indians, asked their old men about it. Even the oldest knew nothing of Lewis and Clark. The first white men who came among them! That must have been a long time ago, before they were born, but the "plain Indian road," they had always known that. That was "the road to the buffalo," traveled from time immemorial by Shoshone, Flathead, and Nez Perce, over the mountains to the buffalo country.

Perhaps some day the summit of this pass, the decisive point in our first crossing of the continent, may be marked with a suitable tablet, but not, let us devoutly pray, by any "monument" which would mar the simple grandeur of the surrounding scene. If it be argued that few would see it, the same might be said of the bronze tablet on the summit of the Grand Teton. The latter commemorates the first recorded ascent of that peak, but a tablet at Lemhi Pass would commemorate a much earlier event, and one of immeasurably greater historic importance.

I was a latecomer on the Lemhi; my first visit was in 1893. Eleven years later, after a short hunt at the head of Timber Creek, I passed two months in camp with Tendoy, who was then, and had been for many years, recognized as the principal chief. Eighty years old, he was still as robust and straight as a lodgepole, yet he was beginning to feel his age, and on suitable occasions he would explain that it was his wish that his son, *Topompy*, Black Hair, should succeed to the chieftainship, which he did. (Topompy died in 1929.)

Tendoy was a man of fine type and unusual intelligence; in fact, from my first acquaintance with these Indians I was surprised to find them far superior to what I had been led to expect from my reading of Lewis and

Clark, who say: "The Shoshones are of diminutive stature, with thick flat feet and ankles, crooked legs, and are, generally speaking, worse formed than any nation of Indians we have seen." Many writers have since described them in much the same terms, yet, having seen most of the tribes these explorers saw, and some they did not see, I should not hesitate to say that many of the Lemhi Shoshone equal in bodily form, stature, and general good looks any of the tribes I know.

A son of Tendoy, known to the whites as Jack Tendoy, was a tall, splendid specimen of humanity. Thomas Donaldson* says, in speaking of Moses Keokuk:

"He is a man above 6 feet . . . and is one of the handsomest, and with the exception of Jack Tendoy of the Shoshone, probably the handsomest Indian chief in America."

The Lemhis are not all of one type, and probably, like other peoples the world over, they are of mixed origin. With Indians this is often traceable to the adoption of prisoners, and would account for the wide difference in physical traits often found in the same tribe.

I had a copy of Lewis and Clark with me in camp, and often talked with the older men about the things there described. I spoke of the salmon weirs which in those days were in the river. They still had salmon weirs, and took me to see them, though it was past the season and they were partly dismantled. I learned that a party of ranchers, up the valley, objecting to these fish traps because they prevented the salmon from going farther up, thus depriving them of a delicacy of which they also were fond, had at one time made a descent, armed with the necessary axes and crowbars, to destroy the weirs. The Indians protested. It had always been their custom to have fish traps in the river, and they depended largely on the salmon for food. They did not wish their weirs destroyed.

* Donaldson, Thomas, *Smithsonian Report*, July, 1885, Part II, Washington, 1886, under Catlin Indian Gallery, p. 31.

By no means deterred by this argument, the whites proceeded to the river, where they found a considerable number of Indians seated along the bank with their rifles. The Indians said nothing. After all, thought the ranchmen, these Indians are good neighbors, they have always had their fish traps, and the salmon mean more to them than to us. So the weirs were left undisturbed.

I got some interesting facts from Tissidimet, but Tendoy proved the better antiquarian. He must have been born about nineteen years after Lewis and Clark's visit, and knew nothing definite of these first white men, nor could one be sure that he remembered Bonneville, who at one time made the Lemhi and Pahsimeroi his winter quarters, but he did recall with evident amusement that almost fabulous era when white men dressed in fringed buckskin, like Indians, painted their faces, wore their long, braided hair wrapped in strips of otterskin and ornamented it with war-eagle feathers. In those days, too, there were white men at Fort Hall who said "*Oui, oui*," and traded flintlock guns to the Indians. Tissidimet thought these men were called "Dutchmen," but when I told him they must have been Frenchmen he remembered that that was right. He had been to the site of the old fort a few years before but found no trace of it except a few stones.

In those old times, said Tendoy, when war parties of Blackfeet [*Pa'-ki-ba*] came over the mountains and fought with the Shoshones throughout the valley and among the foothills where the lone giant fir stands, north of the "handsome bold creek which runs to the westward," he was a small boy, but the old fir tree, except for a little more baldness at the top, looked just the same now as when he was a child. These, assuredly, were the days of Captain Bonneville and Nathaniel Wyeth, though, by name, Tendoy knew them not.

He also recalled the ritual of the pipe, described by Lewis and Clark (a custom still kept up by the Crows in

1890, but apparently long discontinued by these Shoshones), and the putting off of the moccasins at a first council with strangers.

My efforts to explain to him the name of the Bird Woman's brother, the Chief Cameahwait, were for a long time unsuccessful. I divided it into various combinations of syllables, accenting first one and then another, bearing in mind the meaning of it as given by Lewis and Clark, "he who does not walk," and at last he had an inspiration. The name, he said, was *Ke' mī'-a-wat*, which would seem to mean "He Does Not Go," or better perhaps, "He Goes Nowhere." The other name of this chief, his war name, Black Gun, [*Toettecone*,] was more easily recognized. The Indians pronounced it *To-o'-wet*, the "o" being curiously prolonged, but they could not account for the last syllable, "cone," which they thought superfluous and meaningless.

I have said that our explorers crossed the mountains by one of the easiest passes, only to find their further progress in a direct line west blocked by insurmountable obstacles. From the summit of the pass their first sight had been of "high mountains partially covered with snow still to the west of them." This was nothing. These mountains partially covered with snow in August could have been crossed in more than one place, even two months later, and the Indians could have shown them the passes. The really formidable barriers lay further west, beyond their sight and ken.

This is not to say that such a route would be impracticable today, with our present knowledge of topography, with improved trails and even graded roads and bridges, but for Lewis and Clark in 1805 the only way was by a detour either to the south or the north, and these Shoshones told them so honestly. The best route they knew was the one they used themselves.

There happened to be at the time among the Lemhis an

Indian from the southwest who drew a discouraging picture of the difficulties to be met in that direction. There were first the rough mountains without game. The mountains are rough; it is true, but even at this day they are not entirely without game, yet the greatest danger, he said, was from "a fierce warlike people, whom he called the Broken Moccasin, or Moccasin with Holes, who lived like bears in holes, and fed on roots and the flesh of such horses as they could steal or plunder from those who passed through the mountains." Of course, this in itself was sufficient to deter the explorers from attempting the Southern route. They anticipated difficulties enough without having to fight their way through hostile tribes.

Now, who were these Broken Moccasins? From their fierce disposition, and the region they were reported to inhabit, I guessed them to be the Bannacks, and I found, on its appearance three years later,* the *Hand-book of American Indians* inclined to the same opinion. I asked Tendoy. The Moccasins with Holes? Yes, he knew about them. Were they the Bannacks? No, they were not the Bannacks. The Moccasins with Holes used to live in the mountains; he had heard the old people tell about them. Where were they now; had he ever seen them? I asked. No, said he, no living Shoshone had ever seen them. A long time ago, he thought, there had been "heap rain," rain for many days. With a few disjointed words of English, and far more eloquent gestures, he described the rising of the waters, which at last covered the mountain tops. First the mouths of the Moccasins with Holes went under, then their noses, and finally the tops of their heads. With one sweep of his right hand across the palm of his left he showed how completely the Moccasins with Holes were wiped out. Lewis and Clark, it would appear, had been turned from the Southern route by a report of a mythical race.

* *Hand-book of American Indians*, Part I, pp. 129-30, under Bannack.

Tendoy, in his way, was a linguist. He did not know many words outside his own language, but he knew words most Indians do not know, and as a rule he pronounced them correctly. He would say "Good morning," and "*Mucha bueno*," but when he said "oceans" he meant oysters, and to him "toll gate" was the telephone line with its poles, which ran past Charlie Leib's and down to Salmon City. He had done some traveling and knew of oysters because he had eaten them in Washington in 1880. He had lived among the Flatheads, was at the Fort Laramie treaty conference in 1866, and had hunted buffalo and fought the Sioux in company with the Crows. Also he had fought successfully against the *Pa'-ki-ba* [the Blackfeet]. If his efforts to speak foreign languages were not always crowned with the success they deserved there was one method of communication in which he might well rank as past master; that was the sign language. While in Washington he had been of assistance to Garrick Mallory in the preparation of his monograph on that subject,* and many of the illustrations for it are from photographs of him.

After Lewis and Clark, came a period of nearly fifty years—a long time in Western history—during which there seems to have been no reference to this region with the exception of casual mention by Bonneville, and even here an intimate knowledge of the country is needed to determine where he went. Given certain definite points of departure, such as Horse Prairie, Pierre's Hole, the Teton Peaks, the Three Buttes, and Market Lake, it is possible to sketch the rest of his wandering but only in broad outline with the merest suggestion of detail.

Teton, in this connection, is the French *teton*, "a teat," and is not to be confused with the Sioux word, *Teton*, from *ti-ton-wan*, meaning "those who live on the prairie." Pierre's Hole is now Teton Basin, and Market Lake—a

* *First Annual Report, Bureau of Ethnology, Washington, 1881.*

place name a hundred years old, one of the oldest in the Interior Basin—has been changed to "Roberts!"

With a company of Nez Percés, and probably Shoshones, Bonneville and his party must have passed the early part of the winter of 1832-33 in the Lemhi, until threatened by an invasion of Blackfeet, which caused them to seek safety in a more remote valley on another branch of Salmon River, which was probably Pahsimeroi. This no doubt was the period of Tendoy's white men with the long hair and painted face—the golden age of the free trapper.

As mute evidence of the first attempt at a settlement, there stood forty years ago, and perhaps still stands, a curious structure of adobe called Fort Lemhi. It was two or three miles north of the reservation boundary, and, when I last saw it, it was used as a corral at the Sharkey ranch. According to tradition it was built by the Mormons in 1850, evidently as a work of defense against Indians, but it was so badly situated that almost all parts of the quadrangle would have been exposed to the fire of an enemy posted on the low hills less than two hundred yards to the east. The loopholes were made by the simple process of building the mud bricks around a huge crowbar, which afterwards was drawn out, leaving an aperture two feet long (the thickness of the wall) by three inches square, through which, it is true, a gun could be thrust and fired, but as there was no possibility of varying the aim in any direction a weapon so immovable could have been dangerous only to an enemy unwise enough to stand in front of it. An Indian on the outside could have crept along the wall and fired through the loopholes as effectively, and with as little risk, as those on the inside could have fired out. In fact, the building of this fort was a monstrous example of wasted energy, and, when the Indians told its defenders to go, there was nothing to do but comply.

The final coming of permanent settlers, in 1855, has been alluded to elsewhere, and from that time the history

of the Lemhi is easily traced. Strouds vied with Yearians, and Yearians with Strouds, to make it a better place to live in, and all got on famously with the Indians. As time went by the Purcells and other families came in, but for many years there was a story current that any well-to-do resident of Lemhi might with reasonable certainty be addressed as "Mr. Yearian," or, if by any chance that name failed to fit, one had only to add, "Excuse me; I should have said Mr. Stroud."

Not only were the Shoshones good neighbors, they acted also as allies in case of need. Not only had Tendoy's people, the people of *Saca'gawea* and *Ke' mi-a-wat*, contributed to the success of the Lewis and Clark expedition—and without their help the venture in all likelihood would have failed—but later they stood between the settlers on the Lemhi and the hostile Nez Percés, and at last they were removed root and branch from the valley which had been their home as far back as our history goes, and where they had played no insignificant part in the early history of the West.

I do not know the necessity for their removal, nor whether the rumors of mineral wealth on the reservation had anything to do with it, but though the land at Fort Hall, where they now are, is better than that they formerly occupied, and is in a rich and rapidly growing agricultural district, their tenure of it, judging the future by the past, is not likely to be the more secure on that account. So far as I could learn, their white neighbors of the Lemhi were not anxious to have them go, and some of them actually regretted it.

Tendoy, the Climber, had given his word, years before, that when the government found it desirable to move his people they should go peaceably, and so they did, but Tendoy himself, a man of deep feeling and strongly attached to his old home, was not required to make the sacrifice. He died before the removal of his people, at about the age of

eighty-three, and was buried just south of the "handsome bold creek," on the level bar where for generations the Shoshones had raced their horses, and, Indian fashion, piled their bets against the result.



Darkness Descends on the Pipe Dance

"Smoke the calumet together,
And as brothers live henceforward!"

—LONGFELLOW'S *Hiawatha*

OMAHA Agency and its vicinity on the Missouri near the Black Bird Hill, where the chief of that name was buried astride his favorite war horse, was by way of becoming a center of frontier civilization long before the city of Omaha was dreamed of. Moreover, had the Union Pacific started as was originally intended, from the now obscure and comatose hamlet of Decatur, just below the agency, there might have been no Omaha, or at least Decatur would have been the flourishing city of Eastern Nebraska. This, and the fact that the first church in Nebraska was built there, is Decatur's proudest boast today.

At the agency, forty-odd years ago, the most venerable monuments of this respectable past were the former Quaker mission in its shady lawn, and, near the Presbyterian Church on the hill, an old blockhouse, reminiscent of the days, not then so remote, when the Sioux were pretty bad.

Nor was this the only reminder of that intertribal warfare. There was the man with the Roman nose, still in his prime, who had killed two Sioux at one shot. There was

the thicket of plum bushes, or chokecherry, where a characteristically gruesome joke was played. A young Omaha riding by had discovered two youths hiding in the brush, as though bent on some boyish prank. Supposing them to be of his own people, he stopped his horse and greeted them with a facetious remark. They were Sioux; they shot him dead.

Then, too, there was Logan Creek, where Logan Fontenelle, descendant of that old Fontenelle of earlier Western history, met his death, also, of course, at the hands of the Sioux. This, according to Indian tell, was another of those cases of premonition of which they are so fond. The man, they say, had formed the fixed idea that he would be killed on a certain day. Accordingly, he dressed in his best for the occasion, and, true to his prophecy, on that day the Sioux got him.

While many of the Omahas were still pretty much Indian in their way of thinking, there was ample evidence of that cultural past to which I have alluded. The La Fleche family, Francis, and his talented sisters, "Bright Eyes" (Mrs. Tibbles), Mrs. Picotte, the teacher, and Susan, the physician, were shining examples, and there were others. Naturally, these people were not sympathetic toward some of the more barbarous customs of their non-progressive neighbors, but it may be said to their credit they were very proud of their Indian blood.

I went to the Omahas in the summer of 1892, to make illustrations for articles by Alice C. Fletcher, for whom Frank La Fleche (then on vacation from his work in Washington) was acting as ethnological adviser and art editor in the field. The articles appeared in *The Century*, and the original drawings are now, I believe, in the Peabody Museum at Cambridge, Massachusetts. As this work neared completion I took up quarters in the old Quaker mission house, boarding with a white man named Wickersham, who worked in the trading store and was married to a

woman of half-blood. They also disapproved of some of the Indian customs, but in such a good-natured, tolerant way, that through them I was able to learn of coming events which might be of interest. Here I stayed until near Christmas.

Among the ceremonies most generally frowned upon by the progressive element was the Dance of the Calumet, now called the Pipe Dance; but why this disapproval? I was at a loss, at first, to understand it.

The Calumet and its accompanying dance were classic. The earliest travelers, when not greeted with a shower of arrows, were met by a delegation bearing the calumet, symbol of peace. Was not the ritual of the calumet the most dignified and sacred of Indian ceremonies? Had not reams been written about it by encyclopedic writers, deriving the word from the French *chalumeau*, a reed? How had the splendid Dance of the Calumet, of ancestry honorable and *sans reproche*, degenerated into this thing of abomination, the Pipe Dance? The answer will be plain when we get to it, but first let us consider briefly the calumet and its meaning.

We know that pipe smoking and the use of tobacco in general, had among the Indians a certain ceremonial and often a sacred significance. Several species of *nicotiana* were, and still are, grown for special use in religious rites, though for ordinary use our commercial tobacco has in almost all cases superseded them.

Up to the time of which I write, the Crows and some others, even in their casual smoking, followed a regular formula. After the lighting of the pipe the stem was first directed toward the east, then to the zenith, then to the west (obviously an offering to the sun), and lastly toward the earth, after which it passed from hand to hand to the left (which, with reference to the position of the host, on the north side of the lodge facing south, would be sunwise) around the circle, each man taking about four

puffs of smoke, which he inhaled with an audible intake of breath, after which the smoke would continue to roll from his nostrils for several seconds. This tobacco was dry plug bought from the traders, mixed about equally with the inner bark of the red willow, often called "kinnikinick," which is really a kind of dogwood. This blending made the smoke less strong, but heavy and sweetish; one not accustomed to it, inhaling in the wholehearted Indian way, was likely to find himself a trifle groggy.

Further to the Northwest the leaves of the bearberry (*uva ursi*), the *sac à commis* of the French *voyageurs*, were sometimes used instead of red willow. This was also called "kinnikinick," or more often "larbe," seemingly a corruption of the French *l'herbe*, or possibly *l'arbre*, though the bearberry is neither a grass nor a tree, but a ground-clinging, trailing shrub.

When the pipe was exhausted, or after the last man in the circle had smoked, it was passed back to the owner, to the right, but no one smoked it while it passed in this direction.

For a white man to be invited to smoke with a group of Indians was always a friendly gesture, but as these people barely touched the mouthpiece to their lips the stem was always dry. After a white man had stuck the stem in his mouth after the manner of an infant with a nursing bottle, I have seen the Indian next on his left wipe it off surreptitiously with the palm of his hand before smoking.

Pipes were of different kinds, depending on the taste of the owner or the purpose for which they were intended. Some were so long they had to be lighted by an attendant; some were plain, others beautifully ornamented.

Any business of importance, council or treaty, was preceded by a smoke. On their hunting expeditions, if one party met another of a different tribe, one might propose that they smoke together. If the offer were accepted the



Calumets

Above: Ioway pipe in the *Musée de la Marine*, the Louvre, Paris, from a pencil sketch made in 1886. Below: Calumet, without bowl, used in the Pipe Dance.

meeting usually ended peaceably; if rejected hostilities often followed. So the pipe became a symbol of peace, though it seems to have been a stem of a particular type, rather than the bowl, which possessed this significance. So much was this the case that, with the Omahas at least, the famous calumet of the calumet dance was merely a decorated stem, perforated as if for smoking, but with no bowl attached.

While presumably any pipe might serve as a peace pipe in an emergency, contrary to our accepted beliefs, the Omaha seem not to have used the calumet in this connection, but rather a flat-stemmed pipe of the more ordinary pattern. Apparently, while retaining its symbolism, the ceremonial calumet has lost its function as a practical pipe.

I admit my previous notions of peace pipes and calumets were rudely upset by this discovery—the astounding fact that the calumet had no bowl, therefore could not be smoked—but I recalled an Onondaga ceremony in which a dancer, crouching most uncomfortably, I thought, imitated the motions of an eagle, waving in each hand a stick with a row of swinging feathers attached, resembling slightly, and only in this respect, the Omaha calumet. This, however, did not explain the mystery, for while in the Onondaga dance the sticks do not in the least suggest pipes or pipestems, the Omaha calumets unquestionably are pipestems.

In the Omaha pipe dance (we may as well call it by the name now commonly used) there are two of these stems, of which the most conspicuous ornaments are a pendant-swaying fan of golden eagle tail feathers, and the skins of the head of redheaded woodpeckers wrapped around the shaft, with the upper mandible attached and bent back. Several of these last are set at intervals along the stem, each giving a dash of brilliant scarlet.

Such a calumet was presented to Louis Philippe by the

Ioway Indians who were exhibited in Paris with the Catlin collection in 1845. Forty years later, having survived political upheavals and wholesale destruction of public buildings, a similar symbol of peace (labeled "Pipe Ioway, 1809") still reposed in the Musée de la Marine, housed in an obscure corner of the Louvre. How did such a thing get into a naval museum; could it have been the calumet of the bourgeois king wrongly labeled as to date? Possibly. If so its power to pacify had little effect on the mob which later clamored for his demission.

In passing it may be noted that notwithstanding the supposed derivation of the word "*calumet*," these stems are not generally of reed at all, but of ash.

The pipe dance of recent years is merely a ceremony of adoption where horses and other presents of value are given away. To be adopted, or to have one's child adopted, is a great honor, but a costly one, and for this reason the honor is sometimes declined on the ground that the family cannot afford it.

A girl who has been adopted has a distinguishing mark tattooed on her chin. The Omahas make this mark by means of several needles set in the end of a willow stick about a foot long and in diameter slightly less than a lead pencil, to the other end of which are tied a number of hawk bells, to impart a note of gaiety, perhaps, to an otherwise painful ordeal.

There were several pipe dances while I was with the Omahas, but in every case but one they had already taken place before I heard of them. A white man who had married into the tribe attended one of these, and was given two horses which on delivery proved to be pathetic crow-baits, undersized even for Indian ponies, racks of bones which could not possibly live through the winter. The pipe dance, it seemed, had become a racket. As a matter of fact, one of these steeds died within the week, and as it lay at the foot of a hill back of the agency its shrunken frame

yielded a meager repast for Wickersham's bull terrier and one or two half-grown pigs; I doubt if the coyotes of the outlying prairie were greatly tempted by it.

At last came a day when I got news of a pipe dance before the event, and I determined to see it. Thinking it would be well to have someone who could interpret and explain the details of the ceremony, I asked the young half-breed brother-in-law of my host to come with me, but he refused, saying, "It's too dangerous." Asked to explain, he told me that the trouble was drink, that not long before a man had been shot in the jaw. From another witness I had a full description of the wound. The lower jaw was split at the chin, the mouth was filled with clotted blood, mangled tongue, broken teeth, and splintered bone—not a pleasant picture for one contemplating attendance on such festivities! The friends of the wounded man would not let the agency doctor touch him; the medicine men cured him, or at any rate he got well. Another man, returning from the dance, had been shot at and missed. He had rolled off his horse at the shot, and his assailant, too drunk to realize just what had happened, rode on in the comforting belief that he had killed him. In fact, according to reports, there was hardly a pipe dance without shooting or stabbing.

The dance was to be at the large earth lodge above the agency, where I had made a number of sketches and was well, and I may say favorably, known, for I had taken care that my work should not interfere with the occupations of the inmates, and had always made it a point to make some payment to any I might introduce in my studies. I had even done as much for some who had less claim on my purse.

One old man had explained through a young fellow who interpreted that he had built the lodge, that it had taken him more than twenty days to build it, and it had cost him much labor, but he was glad he had built it be-

cause now I could make pictures of it. To have had this great tabernacle, forty or fifty feet in diameter, reared as it were for my special and transient use was so flattering that in a like spirit of generosity I gave the old man twenty-five cents.

Some weeks later I was there again sketching, when the ancient lodge builder repeated the same speech, before the same audience, and through the same interpreter. "He forgets," said I, "that I paid for building the lodge once before"—the old man seemed crestfallen—"but," I continued, "it's a good lodge, and I am willing to pay for it a second time." This infantile fooling caused a general burst of laughter, and the second payment was all the more gladly received. Indians do have a sense of humor.

One of the sketches I made was of an old man in a dull-red blanket; they called him *He Who Shot the Ghost*. The story was that, when young, he was hunting across the river, and had killed a deer. It being after sundown, and he far from home, he decided to stay by his kill and camp in the willows for the night. It was cold, and as he sat by the fire cooking a piece of liver, he heard a slight crackling among the frozen willows and thought it might be a wolf attracted by the smell of the broiling meat. He listened intently; the sound came nearer. He raised his gun, the brush parted, and a human figure wrapped in a buffalo robe emerged stealthily, loosened his robe as though to warm his hands, displaying an array of whitened ribs and a skull whose bare teeth glistened in the fire light. The hunter fired, and at the shot, "it went off in the sky, and whooped like a young man."

The night of the pipe dance I arrived at the lodge in the early evening. It was late November; a large fire burned in the center. The sacred child (the one to be adopted), dressed in her finest raiment but looking very disconsolate, sat on a raised dais, in semidarkness at the back. The light of the fire and a few kerosene lamps set on



Omaha Indians

Left to right: Playing Bull, Little Crow, Meet in the Dark, Little Cook.

rough shelves on the supporting posts barely penetrated the chilly gloom in which she sat. Possibly the solemnity of the occasion weighed upon her, or was it anticipation of the long and tedious night and the tattooing? A few women, members of her family, were there also.

Soon guests and spectators began to arrive. I noticed that the inner circle around the fire was reserved for the more distinguished, probably the leaders of the affair, among whom one of the most important evidently was George Fox, whose name seemed to hark back to the days of the Quaker mission. He was a man tall and dignified, whose manner showed the broadening effects of travel, for he had toured the continent of Europe with a party of his people, not as a vulgar side show—perish the thought—but as an ethnological exhibit camping in the Jardin d'Acclimatation in Paris, and later in Vienna and Berlin.

In fact, it was in Paris, about eight years before, that I first met him. At that time he wore his hair roached, and looked for all the world like some Indian hero of the days of our childhood, straight out of Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*, as depicted by Darley. Stripped to the breechclout, and mounted on a curveting steed, he was truly a figure of romance, so much so, indeed, that a lady from Vienna followed him to his home in Nebraska, and was disillusioned.

George Fox spoke some English and a little Sioux. He had a manner which was truly courtly. Stepping forward, he graciously invited me to seat myself among the elect, an honor which I declined, as I had only one saddle horse which I did not care to give away, and I did not wish to receive gifts of horses, no matter how fine. Besides, I had seen some of their gift horses, which were far from good. I was firmly resolved to be only a spectator, and so avoid becoming involved in the jealousies and hard feeling which these contests in generosity seemed to generate.

A noteworthy feature of the pipe dance is that the

pipe and dancing have so little part in it. It is true that at one point in the ceremonies two calumets are presented, or "danced," by assistants who sway in a kind of dance step to the cadence of gourd rattles which they also carry, but this I gather from verbal accounts by others, and from written descriptions, particularly that of the Reverend J. Owen Dorsey.* It is an excellent account of the pipe dance *as it ought to be*, and it is my misfortune that it bears not the slightest resemblance to what I here describe. The fact that I saw neither dance nor calumet is perhaps sufficiently explained by what follows.

Up to a late hour, apart from the pathetic child of adoption and the crowd of spectators, there was little to indicate to one ignorant of the language that the occasion was anything more than an informal chat around the fire. Things dragged their uneventful course; there was not even a glimpse of the drunken brawling I had been led to expect; the pot refused to boil, perhaps because it was being watched.

At last, however, it became noticeable that an exhilarated individual had usurped the floor, and demanded attention, though every effort was made to ignore him. He walked about, talking loudly, but as no one paid any attention to him he grabbed a stick of blazing cordwood from the fire, and, holding it like a scoop shovel, fiery end forward, he proceeded at a spirited trot around the circle of reverend seniors, aiming at their point of contact with the ground. They, pretending still to ignore him, though they could not well ignore the swift advance of the fiery coals, gathered their blankets around them, and got out of range with as much dignity as the emergency would permit.

For a while this easy victory seemed to satisfy the drunken man, but it was soon followed by another demon-

* Dorsey, J. Owen, *Omaha Sociology, Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology*, 1881-82, Washington, 1884.

stration which revealed the marvelous patience Indians show in dealing with drunken men and lunatics; they will stand anything from them rather than offer active resistance.

The intoxicated one appeared with a knife, shouting angrily what seemed a challenge or a threat, which he kept repeating. It ended always with the question, "*Eb-be-a?* [Who?]"

This challenge to mortal combat meeting with no takers, he suddenly remembered the group of elders, against whom he must have held a standing grudge. Shouting his threats, staggering in front of them, stumbling over their feet, his knife weaving crazily within an inch of their scalps, they appeared unmoved as though he did not exist.

As no one had dared oppose him, his final tour of the arena was a veritable triumphal progress. As he swept around the dimly lighted outer circle, he drove his knife with a thump into each post as he passed, never failing to repeat his "*Eb-be-a?*" Peering into the faces of the crowd as though in search of some particular enemy, he at length approached where I stood. A frightened young man jostled me aside, and crouched in the darkness behind me. It was rather surprising, this indecent haste to take refuge behind a white man, as some of the young bucks had at first shown a rather thinly disguised unfriendliness, if not toward me, at least toward my work. The belligerent "warrior," his attention attracted by this stir in the ranks without grasping the meaning of it, and apparently thinking it was I who had betrayed such alarm at his approach, stopped short and faced me.

I felt that I was at a disadvantage; I couldn't understand his harangue, which he now addressed directly to me, and, besides, I was rather keenly concerned about the knife. Lacking the stocial indifference of the elders, I was inwardly planning an effective counterattack, when he seized my wrist and struck my hand against his breast. At

the same moment, fortunately, perhaps, for both of us, I caught the word, *o-hi'-ti-ka*, which is the same in Sioux, and means "brave." It was a happy inspiration. I thumped him vigorously on the chest, and said "*To, li-la o-hi'-ti-ka!* [Yes, very brave!]"

This tardy and somewhat forced tribute to his courage, which his own people had withheld, seemed to be the one thing needed to calm his angry spirit, for he was shortly after in a maudlin and repentant mood. Seated on one of the bunks, he was allowing to flow from his own mouth into that of a companion a gulp of the potent elixir which had so recently inspired his deeds of derring-do. This rite is one of reconciliation, and must be of considerable antiquity, as it is described by travelers of a hundred years back and more. Whether the beverage was lemon extract, Jamaica ginger, or some concoction called "bitters," I do not know, for there were severe penalties against selling whiskey to Indians, and I judge of its potency merely by its effects. Of one thing I am certain: the nerves of this knight of the knife and the flaming lance were sadly unstrung for several days, but for the remainder of that night he lay sprawled in peaceful slumber under one of the bunks.

The period of quiet which ensued was rather grateful after the previous excitement, but it was lasting so long it seemed likely to become tedious, when two of the dignitaries of the inner circle began to compliment each other. They were George Fox, who had toured Europe, and Little Cook (or Cook's Little), who in 1883 had been with Barnum's circus. Even apart from their travels they were men of importance, men of determination, of the warrior class. When they spoke people listened, and now they were speaking. Elsewhere in the great Lodge was ominous silence.

They were seated about fifteen feet apart. What they were saying I had no means of knowing, but their voices

were suspiciously soft and low, and they spoke with extreme deliberation. Only their obsequious manner and their sneering smiles showed there was anything wrong. Their remarks evidently hit home, for after a few exchanges they rose quickly and started for each other.

Evidently there was more danger in these calm ironies than in all the violent threats which had gone before. Instantly all was darkness, a darkness more complete, I believe, than I had ever known; the women had seen to that. At some prearranged signal they had put out lamps and scattered the fire. The only opening to admit light to these vast cellarlike caverns is the three- or four-foot smoke hole in the roof, and even by day the light is dim.

Not another word was heard. Invisible figures groped their way about, some seemingly went out, though most, I suppose, remained. I waited—I do not know how long—but nothing happened. The cold became unbearable; I felt my way out and found my horse.

With mingled emotions, wistful memories of the "pipe loway" in the Louvre, mellowed by age and, perhaps, by beneficent moths, stripped of tawdry dross and non-essential; of Father Hennepin's wonderful calumet, passport to tribes unknown; of the many flattering things which I, as a trusting child, had heard of this sacred emblem; dejected, all but disillusioned, I gave my pony his head to find his own way home. He betrayed my confidence by loping slam into the barbed wire fence which surrounded the agency field, but otherwise carried me safely through the murk of doom which precedes the dawn, to what once was (in better days?) the Quaker mission.



Some Indian Religious Beliefs and Myths

KEYSERLING says: "The gods are simultaneously both more and less than we are." Especially is this true of primitive gods, for the gods of very primitive peoples are sometimes not even human in form, or, if human, their ethics and morals are no better—and often they are worse—than those of the people themselves. Swayed by human emotions, they are superhuman only in their ability to work miracles and do as they choose without fear or restraint.

In so far as the American Indians are concerned it is doubtful if they had, originally, any conception of infinity or eternity; of one supreme, omnipotent deity; or of a religion which imposed definite laws of conduct as between man and man. There were, of course, rules governing man's behavior toward his gods, infractions of which either by omission or commission gave offense to the gods, and brought as a penalty ill-health or misfortune, but transgressions against their fellow-men were punished by their fellow-men, not by their gods. Belief in a future life of some sort seems to have been widespread, but with only the vaguest conception, if any, of a future state of reward or punishment.

As a rule, murder, theft, and adultery were avenged by the injured party or his friends if they were strong enough,

or perhaps by a tribal council, but the idea of a deity taking the matter up and punishing the delinquent after death would have been beyond their comprehension. The early missionaries had much difficulty in inspiring a salutary fear of hell. Hurons and Iroquois saw nothing incredible in the tales of torture by fire, but they could not be made to understand why the white man's *oki* should wish to torment them for acts in which he could have no concern.

Conduct which injured one's neighbor was condemned among all tribes, but this did not necessarily have any connection with religion. There were among the most primitive many individuals of exemplary life, yet, while deeply religious the wild Indian was not necessarily moral even according to his own standards; but however reprehensible his conduct the fact could not be used, as among Christians, to impugn the sincerity of his religious professions, always excepting those reformed "pagan" religions of several tribes, which are based in a measure on Christian doctrines. A good example of these is the religion taught by *Ganiata'io* [Handsome Lake] which has been adopted by the "pagan" Iroquois, and in which is inculcated a definite moral code.

That a savage should fast and pray for supernatural help in seducing another man's daughter, or stealing his wife, may seem less preposterous to us when we recall that at the time appointed for the assassination of the Duc de Guise, so tradition relates, a group of monks in another part of the castle was praying for the success of an important undertaking. It is such naive touches of human nature that make the whole world kin.

The highest types of religion tend toward monotheism and omnipotence, the lower toward polytheism and a division of power, but even the very superior system of Handsome Lake does not rise above polytheism. Without attempting any fine distinctions between gods, angels, personified suns and planets and lesser supernatural beings, it may be said, roughly, to include at least eight deities, be-

sides other beings which it would be hard to classify according to our standards. It also recognizes the existence of a place called *U-ni'-sun*, [Hell], and of a dreaded one who dwells there, to whom the Onondagas allude as *U-ni'-sun he'-nun* [He of Hell].

Since the coming of the white man, and possibly before that for aught we know positively to the contrary, most tribes have had their Master of Life, Wakonda, *Wa-kan' Tan'-ka*, or Kitchi Manito, which is supposed to be equivalent to God, or Jehovah, but in addition they have believed in a great number of lesser gods (if, indeed, they may be so called), often in the form of animals, birds, insects, reptiles, trees, rocks, and springs; in fact, almost any natural object.

Wa-kan' Tan'-ka is the Great *Wa-kan'*, and *wa-kan'* is the word adopted by the missionaries as the nearest approach to our word "holy" to be found in the Dakota language, but many things which are *wa-kan'* to the Sioux would be anything but holy in the sense in which we use the word. The devil, for instance, would be *wa-kan'*, and so might be a water beetle, a dragon fly, a tree, or a stone. Whiskey, guns, horses—all were *wa-kan'* when first introduced among them, and so, too, was photography. Apart from the sense in which it is now accepted (in connection with Christian worship) *wa-kan'* still means "magic, occult, mysterious, supernatural," but does not necessarily connote goodness, much less sanctity. It is the word commonly translated "medicine." A charm which I might wear tied to my hair braid—and nearly every Indian used to wear such a charm to bring him good luck and thwart his rival in love, gambling, or horse racing—would be *wa-kan'*, and it would be both good and bad—good for me, bad for my antagonist.

Below the level of strictly anthropomorphic gods might be ranked sun, moon, various stars, and the lightning. Below these perhaps would come tricksters like Nanibiju

of the Algonquin peoples and *Unk-to'-mi* of the Sioux, heroes of myths which with variations extend through several groups of tribes, and are only told in winter. Some of these fables would require expurgation in English, but most of them are innocuous, and as they have appeared many times in print in one form or another, it will suffice here to give but one.

Unk-to'-mi of the Sioux myths is the Spider. He might almost be called the Spider-man, for in the stories he appears as a crafty old man, grotesque, with long thin arms and legs, and hairy. In allusion to these characteristics a person who is unkempt and untidy is sometimes called "*Unk-to'-mi*." *Unk-to'-mi*, like the common, everyday spider, has wonderful skill in working stone and other hard materials. Flint arrow points are called by the Sioux *unk-to'-mi ta wun-sma'-hi*, "spider's flint tooth" (or "arrow point"), because the spider makes them. There can be no doubt of this because Good (Pretty) Bear told me he saw spiders make five of them, and to prove it, he said, he could show me the arrowheads.

Unk-to'-mi, "Spider-Man," is cunning enough to deceive others by his tricks, but too stupid to profit by them in the end. Therein lies a humor of the following tale.

One cold day in autumn *Unk-to'-mi* was chilly and hungry. Because he was chilly he lay on the sunny side of a hill which sloped down to a lake on which there were many waterfowl, and because he was hungry he lay there thinking by what trick he could catch some of the birds.

At last he went down near the shore and cut a number of willow sticks which he tied in a bundle and slung on his back. While he was busy at his work the birds watched him, and when he started walking along the edge of the water, pretending not to see him, they swam slowly towards him, and at a safe distance followed after him. Finally their curiosity was too much for them, so they called out, "*Ho! Wi-tcaq'-ca-la, ta-ko lu-ba'?*" [Ho! Old

Man, what have you?]" *Unk-to'-mi* kept on his way as if he had not heard. They called again, this time louder, and *Unk-to'-mi* stopped. He seemed to be angry, and told the birds he had no time to talk to them; he was carrying new songs which he was going to sing to some people beyond the hill.

The water birds urged him to sing some of his songs for them, and at last *Unk-to'-mi* consented, but only on condition that the birds keep their eyes shut as they danced to his singing; if they opened them while he sang they would have red eyes. Agreeing to do as he said, the birds came ashore, grouped themselves ready to dance, and closed their eyes.

Unk-to'-mi sang and the birds danced; the louder he sang, the harder they danced and stamped the ground with their feet. He now began to knock them down with his staff, and had killed a number of geese and ducks, when *Ci'-a-ka*, the Grebe, became suspicious, opened his eyes, and saw what was happening. "*Hûnta*," he cried, "out of the way! He's killing us all." All the birds that were still alive flew away, and *Ci'-a-ka* with them, but since that time *Ci'-a-ka*, the Grebe, has had red eyes.

Now *Unk-to'-mi* made a fire, and put some of the birds to roast on spits of green willow. When these were cooked, he buried the others in the ashes and covered them with live coals to bake. Now, taking one of the birds on the spits, he sat down, to eat, but two near-by trees rubbing together in the wind made such an angry, grumbling noise that he was greatly disturbed by it. Calling the trees brothers, he told them if they did not stop their quarreling he would have to come and separate them. This warning had no effect. The complaining noise continued, and *Unk-to'-mi*, unable to eat in peace, started to separate them.

Climbing one of the trees, he reached the point where they were clinched together, and when the wind slackened a moment, managed to get his long, hairy hands between

them. Thereupon the wind freshened, and *Unk-to'-mi* found that he could neither pull the quarreling brothers apart nor make them let go his hands.

While in this predicament he saw a coyote trotting by at some distance. "Ho! *Mi-sun*," he shouted, "Ho! Brother," but the coyote was a long way off and did not hear him. "Brother," he called again. The coyote stopped and listened. "I have some birds here by the fire," said *Unk-to'-mi*. "I just thought I'd tell you so you won't eat them." The coyote trotted over directly, and ate up all the birds in sight.

"Now," said *Unk-to'-mi* "you have eaten all the birds in sight. Please don't touch the ones I have buried in the ashes." So the coyote dug the birds out of the ashes, ate them too, and trotted away, leaving *Unk-to'-mi* hungrier than he was before.

Then the wind changed, the trees separated, and *Unk-to'-mi* climbed down.

I got this story years ago, along with several others, from an old Yanktonais. The latter part of it I have never seen in print.

Below the tricksters, I suppose, should be placed the spirit animals, archetypes of existing species, and often mythical ancestors of the human family. These, though having the form of animals, are generally endowed with human traits, and while they possess supernatural power, they are distinctly subhuman in other ways, and of such limited intelligence that they may be coaxed or even frightened by the simplest devices. In other words, these creatures, like men, have their taboos which they are obliged to respect, certain things which "they fear" and must avoid.

Wa-ki'-yan, the thunder or lightning spirit of the Dakotas, is not perhaps in the strict sense an animal god, yet he cannot properly be classed among deities of purely human form. Ordinarily he is depicted as a great bird

like a huge golden eagle, but sometimes as partly human in shape, though as the human form unaided does not convey to the primitive mind an adequate idea of supernatural power it is given wings, horns, fierce eyes, and similar features borrowed from the lower animals.

The thunder is his voice, and the lightning the flashing of his eyes, or of mirrors set in his wings. In a comparatively treeless region like that of the Sioux the effects of lightning are truly appalling. Living creatures are frequently struck, and it is little wonder these people stand in awe of the deity who wields such terrifying power.

Charging Thunder, an Uncpapa chief, was a man of unusual intelligence. It was evident that someone had explained to him such problems as the rotation of the earth, its seasonal changes, and the difference in climate between poles and tropics, all of which he seemed to understand fairly well, and accept as fact. But there was one thing he believed the white man incapable of explaining—to his satisfaction, at least—and that was the cause of thunder and lightning. He asked me to explain it to him. Of course I couldn't. Even if he had understood English, or I had had thorough command of Dakota, I could not have done so convincingly, as I had not sufficient knowledge of electric phenomena. The Indian saw my difficulty at once, in fact, had foreseen it, and smiling good-naturedly, told the following story, which not only gives some idea of the Dakota belief regarding lightning, but also shows how personal names are often given from some strange or supposedly supernatural happening.

"Years ago," said Charging Thunder, "when I was very small—about the age when boys are given their names—my people were on the summer hunt near the badlands east of the Black Hills. The badlands are the home of *Wa-ki'-yan*, and are full of the bones of giants he has destroyed [fossil remains of extinct animals]. One day my father, who was one of the scouts sent out to look for



Photo by H. G. Jennerson.

South Dakota Badlands.

buffalo, found a herd at some distance, and went back to make his report.

"As he reached the camp the sky grew very black, threatening a heavy thunderstorm, and the chiefs decided to postpone the hunt till it was over.

"The lightning was very sharp, but after the storm the hunters started for the place where the game had been seen, but there were no buffalo there—no live buffalo—only a number of dead buffalo lying in a line on the ground, and alongside where they lay were the tracks of a running horse, tracks as wide as this." Here he put the tips of his thumbs together and spread the fingers of both hands, indicating a width of some fifteen inches.

It was inferred that this giant horse was ridden by the thunder, or possibly the horse itself was the thunder for Clark Wissler says*: "The horse always appealed to them as a creature of mysterious origin, and in many cases was assumed to have been given by the thunder. In any event there is an association in their minds between the power of a war-horse and the thunder." Whatever the explanation of this particular phenomenon, Charging Thunder was given his name in commemoration of the event.

It used to be very common in the Sioux country to find, on the tops of high hills, bundles of neatly peeled willow sticks somewhat thinner than a lead pencil, often painted a dull red, and each with a small bag of tobacco about the size of a hazelnut tied on the end. These were laid there as a votive offering to *Wa-ki'-yan*, in return for some favor granted by that deity. An old Indian, in explaining this to me, said that if, after making such a vow, an Indian failed to fulfill it, the lightning would be angry, and some day when the delinquent was smoking, it would strike him dead.

Shields, and other valuable and sacred objects, were

* Wissler, Clark, *Some Protective Designs of the Dakota*, New York: Anthropological Papers, American Museum of Natural History, Vol. I, Part 2.

also offered as a sacrifice to the lightning. These were usually hung on trees, and if soon after the sacrifice the thunder and lightning were sharp and vivid it was a sign that *Wa-ki'-yan* was pleased. I have seen trees literally full of offerings, principally pieces of cloth.

During his later years, when Rain in the Face was living on Grand River, I entered his cabin one day and found a small cedar tree, four or five feet high, standing in the center of it. When I asked the reason for this strange encumbrance he answered, "*Wa-ki'-yan li'-la ko-ki'-pa*. [The Lightning is very much afraid of it!]" which I took to be another way of saying that for some reason he was very much afraid of the lightning. It showed at least that even this terrifying power can be controlled through its fears. I have found in other tribes, also, that a bough or even a small twig of cedar is believed to circumvent witches and malign spirits, and spoil the luck of the opposing side in gambling.

The Sioux and many other tribes had their "holy" women, who wielded great influence in matters religious. "Ghost shirts" (so-called by the whites), which were believed, prior to the battle of Wounded Knee, to render the wearer invulnerable, were prayed over and consecrated by a holy woman on Cut Meat Creek, South Dakota. Although after that unfortunate affair the Indians lost some of their faith in the protective power of these garments; they have since told me that they still considered them holy.

The supernatural power of most of these holy women is supposed to have been demonstrated by some miraculous event in their lives.

About the year 1850 the Sioux claim to have found a woman alive in the paunch of a buffalo cow killed by them on one of their hunts. This woman, they say, lived among them for some time, and was regarded as very "holy." I heard at Standing Rock, in the early eighties,

that a sacred pipe which had once belonged to her was then in the possession of Mrs. McLaughlin, wife of Major James McLaughlin, the agent. I cannot vouch for the truth of the report, but, if the Indians believed it, that fact may in some measure account for the remarkable influence this most efficient executive exerted over his charges.

As late as 1902 there lived on Black Pipe Creek, Rosebud Reservation, a Brulé Sioux woman called the Woman Who Lived in the Rocks. She owed her name to the following story, which I heard from Chauncey Yellow Robe. It is easily credible in part, but was accepted in its entirety by the older element in the tribe, and probably still is.

This woman's husband abused her, so she wandered away and became lost. At last the coyotes found her and were kind to her, taking her to a hole in the rocks, and bringing her food every day. Here she lived with the coyotes a whole year, learning to understand and even speak their language. Whenever they saw people passing they would come and tell her of it.

One day some Indian hunters saw her, and she beckoned to them to come to her. They found her very ragged, and unable to speak at first, but, after they had taken her home, her mother tongue came back to her and she told her story. The people went to the cave and found it just as she had described it, with many bones lying about, and dry grass and rough mats which she had arranged there for her bed.

One can hardly fail to note a certain resemblance between these tales and some of the Old Testament miracles, particularly Jonah in the whale's belly and Elijah fed by ravens. Such parallels are not uncommon. Another may be found in the legend of the Standing Rock (told elsewhere), which suggests the fate of Lot's wife.

While the statement may not apply to the more ad-

vanced tribes, it can truly be said in a general way that the Indian is still living in the age of miracles. That age, which is not an age of the world but a period in the spiritual development of each race, and which for most of us is far in the dim past, is by no means past for him. Living in a cosmos of spirit forces, he is ever prepared to witness their marvels.

There are skeptics, of course, everywhere, even among Indians. I once took a trip up Oak Creek with Flying By, at his request, expressly to disprove the statement of an Indian who claimed to have seen a miraculous serpent as big around as a man's thigh and as long as a lariat (twenty-five or thirty feet). We did not find the serpent. Flying By, from the first, had denounced the story as a lie.

We find all peoples, at all times, in process of outgrowing the primitive beliefs of their forefathers; almost invariably they are a step or two in advance of them. With the increase of knowledge the old trivialities no longer satisfy. It is true no one has the courage to discard them utterly, at least not at once, but there is always the tendency to rationalize and explain away inconsistencies. The result is often mere absurdity and more inconsistency.

We find this tendency among Indians, but mostly with those who have long been subjected to the white man's criticism, and are anxious to defend their beliefs. The more primitive are still inclined to take their miracles as they are, with little attempt to rationalize or dissect them, and this, by the way, is not a bad rule to follow. If we admit the possibility of miracles, one miracle is as good as another; we do not strengthen our case by trying to strip it of all that is miraculous.

When an Indian tells you of the marvelous things he has seen with his own eyes, his sincerity is so evident it is impossible to doubt it. You may argue with him to bring out further details, and he is not displeased; you need not pretend to believe as he does for he knows perfectly well



Edge of the Badlands.

you do not, but you must not ridicule him unless you are willing to offend him deeply. In this respect he is no different from other men, except, perhaps, that he is more tolerant of the opinions of others.

The number four, with Indians, is in some connections sacred, or mystic. It is regarded very much as was the number three in various myths and legends on which some of our own traditions are based, only a few of which need be cited. There are the three graces and the three fates. We say "One, two, three, go," in starting certain races or contests, we give three cheers, and the "Oyez" in opening court and other solemn announcements, are three times pronounced, published, or fulminated.

In almost all such cases the number four, among Indians, takes the place of three. There are the four persons, a group of angels, or divine beings of the Iroquois. Many tribes seem to believe that the spirit leaves the body or its vicinity the fourth day, and as the burial takes place immediately after death, one or more watchers, usually women, sit at the grave four nights, with a little fire burning, mourning, and providing food for the deceased. In the story of Standing Rock the husband makes his appeal to the disobedient wife four times before abandoning her. In the red-ball game of the Sioux the pledger of the ceremony throws the ball at the fourth motion. In many religious rites the four winds or quarters of the earth (the cardinal points of the compass) have a mystic meaning, and the simple cross, pointing as it does in four directions, is a favorite symbol.

To the Indian mind the cross originally conveyed no such idea as it does to Christians. Either the single or double cross, with the lower arm longer than the others, represented the dragonfly, an insect which is great medicine with them. The story is told of an early missionary, who in trying to learn the Sioux word for "cross" drew two crossed lines on a piece of paper and asked what that was

called in Dakota. The Indians answered promptly, "*Sus-be'-tca*." Not until some time later did the missionary discover that this was the name for the dragonfly.

It is an interesting fact that, while bitterly resenting the encroachment of the all-conquering white man, the religious thought of the plains Indians became deeply influenced by the white man's religion. The messiah craze was sufficient evidence of this. Often without abandoning their own primitive beliefs they adapted the missionaries' teaching to their own needs with a readiness which was startling, and without considering for a moment the white man's wishes in the matter.

The following vision of a young Brulé Sioux is remarkable for its beauty and pathos. It happened some time after the Ghost Dance excitement and outbreak in 1890. The young man, who had become a convert to Christianity, and dressed like a white man, was dying of tuberculosis.

Previous to his death, when very weak, he was lying one day in his lodge, when his spirit went out from his mouth and began to rise toward the sky. As his spirit reached a small white cloud, two angels met him and helped him to ascend until at last he approached the stars. He then saw that these hung on the tips of what appeared to be great icicles and that those which seemed largest when seen from the earth were attached to the longer icicles, while those on the shorter ones looked smaller on account of their greater distance from the earth.

After reaching a great height he came to two doors, at one of which stood a white man, at the other an Indian. He first went to the door which was guarded by the white man, who said to him, "This is not the door." Then he went to the one where the Indian stood, and the latter said, "This is the door," so he went in and saw a vast and beautiful country spread out before him.

The Indian doorkeeper then said, "Look toward the

east." On doing so he saw in the distance great cities, all of glass, and in the midst of them a fine house. "Those cities are where the white men live, and that is God's house," said the doorkeeper. "Now look toward the west." When he looked there he saw a very large Indian camp with fine tipis, plenty of horses, dogs, and many people. "That is where the Indians live," said the doorkeeper.

The Brulé went in that direction, and came to a large lodge where a great number of people were gathered, seemingly to meet him. They had a feast prepared with many kettles of dog flesh and buffalo meat. Here he met many of the people who had died, among them Spotted Tail, and all were dressed in the old way; nothing but buckskin and buffalo robes. They seemed glad to see him, and told him how much happier they were than when they were on earth. Here they were in comfort, but on earth, while they lived there and tried to be like white men, they had nothing but sorrow, want, and misery. The Indians never again could be happy on earth; they would be better dead.

At last he was hungry, but as they did not offer him anything to eat he came away, and returned to the door through which he had entered. Here he met again the two angels, who escorted him back to earth.

While on the way down from the sky the angels showed him a large island far in the west. No one had ever reached this island, they said, and if anyone ever should do so the world would come to an end. They also told him that the road of the Indian and the road of the white man lay wide apart—each must follow his own. The two roads would never meet, and the Indian would always remain an Indian in spite of the white man's efforts to make him otherwise.

Soon he approached his own lodge, and saw his own body lying there. He descended and went back into it, passing again through the mouth.

After this experience the young Brulé renounced

Christianity, dressed and acted as an Indian, and refused to see priests, teachers, or agency employees of any kind. Sometimes they were allowed to come into the lodge and look at him, but they were forbidden to speak to him, and often on such occasions he would cover his head with a blanket.

Not long after, this Brulé youth died. His vision had a profound effect on his tribe. Many believe firmly that it proves the Indian must always remain an Indian, that as long as he stays in contact with the white man his lot will be one of hopeless misery.

I am indebted to Chauncey Yellow Robe for an account of this man's experience; otherwise I might never have heard of it. Yellow Robe being one of them, and at the same time a man of education, was able to see both sides of the discouraging problem which then confronted his people. It was his business to guide their reluctant feet along the white man's road, which led eventually, after a lifelong struggle against unfamiliar obstacles, to a heaven of glass houses.



More Beliefs and Legends

AS THE Indian had neither books nor written language to crystallize his thought, to question him about his religion was like trying to gain an adequate idea of the white man's theology by questioning an uneducated layman; though as every Indian was potentially a priest, the opinion of one individual was likely to be as good as that of another. Certainly not all thought alike.

With the exception of some of the sedentary groups who had developed cults interwoven with tribal government, where conformity was a matter of policy if not of conviction, religion was largely a matter of individual experience. The number of known gods, or spirits, was almost unlimited, and there was always the possibility of discovering others not previously known. The search for the unknown, or unknowable, will always fascinate the minds of men.

As already intimated, there seems to have been—originally—no conception of one supreme, omnipotent god, and even of late years there is a marked unwillingness in some tribes to accept the white man's god unreservedly in exchange for the ancient deities, though they would willingly adopt him, and in many cases have done so, along with the rest.

As late as 1890 we find (in the vision of the young Brulé, in a preceding chapter) the white man's god living

not in the Indian heaven, but in the white man's heaven as the Indian conceived it, a kind of World's Fair heaven of crystal palaces, or perhaps a celestial Washington, D.C. There were no gods visible in the Indian heaven; they were in the trees, the brooks, the rocks of that Pandean paradise.

When I first knew the Sioux many of them were coldly and courteously unfriendly, but occasionally there was an old or middle-aged man, who, after inquiring in paternal fashion about my home, my parents, my brothers and sisters, would discourse reverently of the Great Spirit, *Wa-kan' Tan'-ka*. I soon found, however, that men of the warrior age seldom mentioned that deity. Their concern was mostly with *Wa-ki'-yan* [the lightning, or thunder being], that awesome force which could splinter a half-mile of agency telephone poles, or kill an entire family with a flash of its eye.

In fact such destructive spirits might be placated by prayers and gifts and so rendered more helpful to humanity than others which were by nature friendly and harmless, but too indolent or inert to be beneficent in any marked degree. Some exerted their magic only when stimulated, and then with utter impartiality, today in the interest of one group of petitioners, tomorrow for their enemies. Such spirits often had their abode in, or were represented by, some inanimate object, a "medicine" bundle, a tree, or a stone. With a fetish of this sort in its possession a tribe was for the time being in the ascendant, provided, of course, it knew the secret of propitiating it, and often this was a matter of common knowledge, so that, captured by the enemy, its power was automatically transferred to its new owners.

The Standing Rock is, or more properly, perhaps, was, such a fetish. At one time the Arickarees were in control of the territory in which it stood, and at that time made prayers to it for the increase of their horse herds, for

bountiful harvests, and last but not least for success in war against their enemies, foremost among whom were the Sioux. Later, when the Sioux gained possession of the region, they invoked its help in combatting its former owners, the Arickarees, which shows the advantage or the disadvantage of a fetish which can be bribed by anyone.

The Standing Rock, in addition to its fame among Indians, gave its name to a place which was identified with important events in the history of the unreconciled Sioux, and for that reason it merits some description, but as a rock it is a complete disappointment. I had imagined a towering crag, such, more or less, as the "Stone Walls" of the trap dike farther up the Missouri toward Fort Benton, but I found it to be merely an elongated boulder, roughly ovoid, darkish in color, and little more than two feet in height. Only in the West, where a stone no bigger than a pigeon's egg would be a "rock," could it be so called.

When I first saw it, it stood upright on its broader end, near the top of a hill Northwest of and overlooking Standing Rock Agency and Fort Yates. At a distance, with a little imagination, it looked something like an Indian woman sitting on the ground with her blanket over her head, as Indian women often do when offended. The Indians really believe that it is a woman turned to stone, much as Lot's wife was turned to salt, and for a somewhat similar reason—disobedience.

The following legend I heard from Mrs. Van Solen, an educated mixed-blood, who had got it a few days before from an Arickaree woman. In the main it is much like the version current about the agency, and being the authentic Ree form it is probably the older of the two.

The story goes that in the long ago there was an Arickaree man who had two wives. One was of his own tribe, the other a Grosventre. The husband showed some preference for the Grosventre woman, and his Arickaree wife, growing jealous and moody, declared that she would

not stay and see her place taken by a woman of another tribe. Thereupon her parents and brother advised her to remain and live peaceably with her husband, but she replied that since even her own relatives seemed so pleased with her rival she was more than ever determined to go away.*

Taking her work bag on her back, she started northward. Her parents and brother followed, trying to persuade her to return, but she refused to listen to them, and kept on to a point about a mile and a half from the later Fort Yates. Here she sat down, drew her blanket over her head, and would neither move from the spot nor accept food. After the second day she told her relatives it was useless to try to take her home, that she could not go with them even if she wished; she could not move. They stayed near her till they found she had turned to stone. Her little dog, which lay beside her, had shared the same fate.

The Indians say there is a small protuberance on "the back" of the stone, which they recognize as the little work bag, but though I have seen it very often I never noticed this. Mrs. Van Solen told me a half-breed boy, in 1878, moved "the rock" some two miles farther (presumably north), and about 1882 or 1883, Major McLaughlin had it brought to the hill northwest of the fort and agency, where in all likelihood it might have remained had not the march of progress, combined with a local scarcity of building stone decreed otherwise.

I had been accustomed from time to time to scan the wintry landscape from the window of my workshop room on the north side of the mess house, and always through the last days of 1884 the standing rock had been plainly visible. I had come to regard it as a permanent

* At that time the Arickarees lived on Grand River, near its mouth, about forty miles below where Standing Rock Agency and Fort Yates were later built. Grand River is the "Wetarhoo" of Lewis and Clark, the *Pa-la'-ni ta Waq'-pa*, or Rees' River, of the Sioux.

fixture, as much so, almost, as the windings of the ice-bound Missouri, with its fringe of desolate cottonwoods, dimly distant through the frost haze; but one day it was gone. An Indian was in the room at the time, and I turned to him and asked, "Where is the standing rock?" His answer was the only one a man in his right mind could have made: "On the hill, I suppose." Called to the window to look, he put his hand over his mouth, and said softly, "Ho, ho *he*!"

A contractor, it seemed, ransacking the countryside for stone for the foundation of a new agency building, had brought in the woman and her dog, and thrown them in a pile with other material. Here the woman was easily identified by her form and by the red paint with which she had been smeared, but her dog was so much like the other small boulders that it could not be recognized, and so was never rescued.

Six years later I found the standing rock, set in mortar, on a brick pedestal in front of the agency office. Major McLaughlin, before that, had had it placed on a base of rough stone, but during his absence, he tells us, someone had conceived the idea of substituting brickwork, as a pleasant surprise for him on his return. Just how much the Major was pleased I never learned, but it is a safe guess he was politic enough to appear delighted.

While it remained on the hill the Sioux regarded this boulder as sacred, the undisputed evidence of a miracle, and showed their reverence for it by painting it, and making offerings to it of all kinds of trinkets, rings, beads, and shells, but after it was set up in full view of the agent's office windows it is reasonable to suppose it was not so often the object of heathen worship. However, I think it was in 1888, it did figure in the prophesying of a would-be partisan named Frosted, who sought to lead a war party against the Crows, but was turned back by the cavalry. He was arrested, shackled, and confined in the guardhouse,

from which, contrary to the usual custom with Sioux Indians, he failed to effect his escape. Here, to prove that he was divinely inspired and able to work miracles, he announced that he would—by magic, of course—make the standing rock come at night to his place of confinement.

The agent being away, George Faribault, in whose veins ran a sufficient percentage of aboriginal blood to make him wise in the ways of both white men and Indians, was in charge of affairs, and judging the time inopportune for miracles, he stationed a guard around the "rock" at night. The result is easily anticipated; there was no miracle.

There have been many instances to illustrate the Indian's genius for escaping from prisons and fetters. Rain in the Face made his escape while shackled to a fellow prisoner in a military guardhouse, and I saw a very good example at Standing Rock. An Indian—insane, of course, to our way of thinking—had, he thought, been directed by some supernatural agency to kill his mother. The mother had no desire to be killed, and the matter being reported to the agent, it was deemed advisable to confine the son.

In the blacksmith shop the bare ankle of the unresisting madman was placed athwart the anvil, while the black smith, Frank Steinmetz, a good fellow with little liking for that kind of farriery, soliloquized: "This is a strange sight for the last quarter of the nineteenth century—" clang, whang, bang—tap, tap—"but the Territorial asylums won't take insane Indians, and the Government makes no appropriation for their keep"—tap, tap—whang.

Witnessing the operation—I might almost say assisting in it from start to finish—I can affirm that the irons fitted snugly, and that the riveting was done in a workmanlike manner. The Indian was led away to the guardhouse, and chained to the log walls inside. This was in the forenoon.

After dinner the men in the messhouse were just leaving the table. I happened to look through an unfrosted

space on one of the windowpanes. An Indian was walking by, free as air, no clanking chains, no galling fetters. "Frank," said I, in bewilderment, "isn't that your Indian?" The blacksmith took a look. "By George!" said he, "it is."

It took more than physical courage, in those days, for an Indian to lay hands on a crazy man. It implied a willingness to defy the lightning itself if need be, for no one knew what powerful spirit might be controlling his actions. To hinder him in anything was equivalent to opposing and probably angering this spirit, and few would take that chance.

However, it was soon apparent that the escape of the obsessed one had been reported at headquarters, and that the two "dependables" of the Indian police force had been selected for the hazardous duty of recapturing him. These men, who now appeared on the scene, were Bull Head and Shave Head, the latter a brother of Rain in the Face. There were many brave men in this picked corps, but these two were rated as the bravest. Six years later, elbow to elbow, they were killed in the attempt to take Sitting Bull alive.

Persuasion was always the first recourse of the Indian policeman; force the last resort. It is remarkable how seldom the latter expedient had to be employed.

Ranging themselves on either side of the crazy one, the two "iron breasts" accompanied him in his promenade, talking amiably the while, and explaining how much pleasanter it would be for all concerned if he would return to the guardhouse voluntarily. Their prisoner, for he was already that, grew restive at length, and walked faster. They did the same. He broke into a run. They ran also, past the messhouse, the carpenter shop, the trading store of Martin and Williams, and over the high-cut bank facing the river, where a deep snowdrift received all three in its clinging embrace.

That night, a watch having been set in the guardhouse,

the prisoner's mother wandered unceasingly over the frozen snow, sobbing and wailing.

It is quite possible the standing rock may have been moved oftener than the foregoing account would indicate. Lewis and Clark mention a "young lady," or "female," who, with her lover and her dog, were turned to stone on "Stoneidol Creek," which was east of the Missouri, and perhaps eighteen or twenty miles below the later Standing Rock. All three stones, they tell us, were "objects of great veneration among the Ricaras." It was another case of defiance of parental authority; the young couple were eloping. No doubt they were changed to stone as a punishment, and to provide the touch of melancholy sentiment required, the world over, in cases of the sort.

Likely as not the stone woman and dog of Stoneidol Creek are identical with those of Fort Yates. They could easily have been transported across the Missouri, by bull boat in summer, or by sled or travois, over the ice in winter. The "youth" may have been left behind because of his greater size and weight, or he may not have been regarded as such powerful "medicine."



Magic and Mystery—The *Grande Médecine*

DURING my experience with Indians, going back more than fifty years, I have heard many tales of wonders. I have known a number of individuals of as many different tribes who assured me that their grandparents had seen the old-time conjurors take the skin of some small animal, a mole for instance, stroke it for a moment, then lay it on the ground, when it would come to life and run about until caught, after which it would once more be a lifeless skin; but none had ever seen this himself.

Francis La Fleche, the well-known ethnologist and author, once told me his father had seen a Pawnee "doctor" swallow the head of a white-tailed [Virginia] deer, horns and all. As the antlers might have a spread of eighteen inches this must have been no simple feat; an attainment never dreamed of by the most expert sword swallower.

I knew an Omaha who once shot a ghost, and an Onondaga, a very good friend of mine, who not only shot a witch, half-bear, half-human, and had seen witches flying through the air blowing flames from their mouths, but promised to show these things to me, though, I regret to say, he never did. Another excellent friend, a Sioux

medicine man, had smoked with the lightning. Another Sioux had seen spiders making flint arrowheads. These, and many similar tales which I do not now recall, are enough to show that the Indian has the "magical mind"—a mind attuned to miracles.

But how much of all this may the matter-of-fact white man ever hope to see? There is no doubting the good faith of the keen-witted Indians who contend that they or their fathers have seen or done these things, nor of the writers here named or quoted, though, in truth, not many of these last seem greatly to have been impressed by what they describe. There are men who are not constituted to see miracles, and this may explain why so many eyewitnesses have been disappointed and have remained unbelievers.

Some writers are inclined to believe—with reservations—that Indian conjurors and medicine men really are wonder workers, just as others pretend to believe in the Hindu rope trick; but still others condemn them as rank impostors.

Grinnell, in his *Pawnee Hero Stories and Folk Tales*, gives a graphic account of the magic of the Pawnee doctors, including the grievous wounding, by shooting, slashing with knives, and cleaving with hatchets, of various actors who took the parts of elk, bears, or enemies, and their miraculous recovery under the treatment of the doctors. The most wonderful feat of all was that of making the corn grow to full height and maturity in one night, from seed planted in the hard dirt floor of the lodge, which had been loosened somewhat, and watered to receive it. It is true that Grinnell, a most conservative observer, did not see these things himself; he gives them on the authority of Captain L. H. and Major Frank North, of the famous Pawnee scouts, both of whom were eminently qualified to speak of the Pawnees, and, to be exact, Frank North, who saw these doctors make the corn grow, did not see it reach

full size, but only a height of about fifteen inches. Even that, however, is sufficiently wonderful.

The Pawnees, and second to them their cousins, the Arickarees, had a great reputation for magic. Whether or not the Norths believed in the genuineness of what they saw does not appear. At least there is no implication of fraud, in which respect their story differs from Samuel Hearne's account of a stave-swallowing conjuror of the North.

Hearne had expressed skepticism, and the magician would not begin his performance till the doubter had been brought near enough to get a good view. Hearne admits he could see no trickery in it, though from an accidental discovery, made a day or two before, he was convinced that there was trickery. Several miles from camp he had come upon the conjuror, without the latter's knowledge, and found him carving a replica of the ornamental haft of the stave he was supposed to swallow. The occasion of this ceremony was the cure of a man who had been so paralyzed that he had had to be dragged on a sled for some time, and the remarkable fact was that after this childish juggling, and the fasting and singing of several assistants, the patient regained the use of his limbs, and was able to walk. Perhaps, after all, faith—faith in anything, no matter how absurd—is the greatest of magicians.

While the Indians stoutly maintain that their medicine men are still capable of astonishing cures, they have to admit that there is today little hope of seeing those greater miracles in which their traditions abound. It is seldom possible to find an eyewitness to such marvels; almost invariably those who saw them are dead, and the Indians themselves believe that the modern conjurors have lost the great power once possessed by the ancients. Again a question of faith, or the lack of it? Works without faith, especially works of art or imagination, rarely carry conviction.

Joseph H. Taylor has this to say of the Arickaree (Ree) medicine*:

I learned from the Sioux on the lower river, that the acme of mystery was in the medicine lodge of the Arickaree; that the medicine making priests of that tribe could catch bullets on their tongues; could walk with bare feet on heaped coals of living fire, yet feel no pain because their flesh would not burn; could outdo the agile otter in springing from the river bank into the muddy, swirling stream, and bring therefrom—tightened in his dripping jaws, a huge fish, that the power of his totem of mystery had assisted him to catch in his dive in watery depths. . . .

But after some familiarity with the sights witnessed during this mystery making of the Arickaree medicine men, or the dancing and ceremony attendant upon the young fledgling's admittance among the mystic group . . . I could see but little that would approach, even, the ordinary slight of hand performer. I had seen the confident young man, after being rubbed down by the priest of mystery . . . rush to the river, make his dive for the fish, that his "medicine" would give him, come back with a dripping side and a woful face, sit down and cry with mortification—in all sincerity—before the intensely interested audience.

Medicine lodges or societies of one kind or another are found in many tribes, but the most widely known is that of which the Mide' Society or *Grande Médecine*, of the Chippewa may be regarded as the type. It varies somewhat from tribe to tribe, and the name changes with the language, but its main characteristics are fairly constant. With the Omaha it is the *Wacicka* Dance, and some tribes of the Sioux had their *Wa-kan' Wa-tci'-pi*, which Jonathan Carver called *Wakon Kitchewah*, "Friendly Society of the Spirit."

The ritual of the society is largely secret, and its members are supposed to have a mysterious power which manifests itself principally in their ability to "shoot" a magic missile into others to their detriment, with corres-

* Taylor, Joseph Henry, *Sketches of Frontier and Indian Life*, (Bismarck, N. D. p 290.

ponding power to protect themselves and their friends from similar attacks and disease.

The missile used is something very mysterious. The initiated will not tell precisely what it is, and others profess not to know, but describe it as something small, oblong or oval, whitish, and translucent. Some say it is like a bean, some a stone, but most think it is a cowrie shell. I have seen it for one conjuror, purposely, I think, gave me a fleeting glimpse of it as it lay in the palm of his hand. It was evident, too, that he intended I should not get more than a glimpse, for I was not able to identify it. I can only say it is five eighths to three quarters of an inch long, more oblong than oval, and whitish. It looked to me more like a piece of bone or ivory than a cowrie.

This missile is supposed to be "shot" from the mouth of a medicine bag made of the skin of some animal of convenient size—not necessarily a predatory animal, though skins of the various Mustelidae, especially the otter, seem to be preferred. The large black-faced ferret, called by the Sioux *i-top'-ta sa'-pa*, often found in the prairie-dog towns, is also a favorite.

The otter is especially "medicine" in that it is supposed, when under water, to surround itself with a glistening mist, or cloud, which makes it invisible both to its prey and its enemies. This, of course, the Indians ascribe to the animal's supernatural powers, but it probably refers to the film, or bubble of air which adheres to the dry fur, or feathers, of such diving creatures as the muskrat and grebe while swimming under water. The pressure of the water forces out the air contained in the fur, or feathers, to the surface of which it clings in a silvery film, so that the animal emerges from the water dry.

When dead, if it has lain for a time submerged, little trace of this bubble of air remains on the fur, therefore it appears to primitive reasoning a device for the protection of the animal while living, but whether due to some mystic

power inherent in the otter itself, or to some higher and more powerful influence solicitous for its safety is all one to the Indian. All he knows is that the otter has some magic which he would appropriate for his own use.

To make the medicine bag the skin is removed entire, beginning with a slit under the throat, and stripping it off backward. Brass tacks are put in for eyes, and tufts of dyed down feathers fastened to the nose or mouth. Very likely this last is as much symbolical as ornamental, a down feather being often used as a symbol for *spirit*. The feet and under side of the tail are generally decorated with porcupine quill, or bead embroidery, and tin jingles. Usually an embroidered rosette adorns the navel.

Ostensibly the fraternity has for its object the prolongation of life, promotion of well-being and happiness, and other benevolent purposes. On the other hand, its members are believed able, and some think, willing, to injure or kill by their magic, if, in their judgment, their personal interests are advanced, or the prestige of their order is vindicated thereby, for they are said especially to resent the ridiculing of their claims to miraculous power. In other words, the manner in which they shall use their magic seems to be left entirely to their discretion.

It seems strange to us that primitive people, no matter how amiable, should be so ready to suspect their neighbors of a secret desire to injure them with a treachery and cruelty of which they themselves, individually, would be utterly incapable, or—horrid suspicion!—would they? We find it constantly among Indians, and in the New England of two hundred and fifty years ago, where if a man had toothache, let us say, the first thought would be "Has he had words with anyone?"

One not a member of the *Grande Médecine*, or otherwise endowed with magic, if shot by a conjuror's missile, either intentionally or by accident, would probably die unless helped by the conjurors, though one of the order

is supposed to be able to cure himself by coughing, or vomiting up the charm with which he has been shot.

Jonathan Carver, Connecticut Yankee (1767), calls the performance of this society the *Paw-waw* or Black Dance, of which, he says, the more ignorant people of the colonies told so many ridiculous tales, even believing that the Indians were in direct communication with the devil—though, of course, says Carver, this was in days gone by, the dance being no longer practiced, or very rarely, by tribes living in the vicinity of the settlements. This is the more believable when we recall that the Salem witchcraft epidemic was “imputed to the *Indian Paw-waws* sending their spirits amongst them.” The prevalence of such a belief would scarcely endear the *Paw-waws* to white communities to whom “Satan’s fiery darts” were a very real, and ever present menace. Carver admits that in the dance, as he saw it among the Nadowessies, or Sioux, there was no evidence of the devil’s presence, though things were done, he says impressively (and with his eye on the audience), that one would not suppose possible without the devil’s help—except by charlatans of incredible skill.

The ceremonies witnessed by Carver were apparently held in a temporary enclosure, similar to those used until recent years by the more Western bands of Sioux. He first describes the initiation of a novice. Not having an English edition at hand, I translate from a French one, printed at Yverdon, 1784:

... the young Candidate was placed in the center, & four of the Chiefs stationed themselves close to him. Then, exhorting him not to be frightened by the operation he was about to undergo, but to conduct himself like a man & a brave Indian, two of them seized his arms, & made him kneel down. Another placed himself back of him, so that he could catch him when he fell, & the last of the four stood in front at the distance of about twelve feet.

These dispositions made, the Chief facing the Candidate knelt, and began to talk to him in a voice easily audible. He told him he was going to be agitated by the same spirit which would soon com-

municate itself to him; that it would strike him dead, but that immediately afterward life would be restored to him: adding that this communication, though accompanied by such terrible effects, was the necessary step toward the attainment of the advantages of the Society to which he was to be admitted.

Immediately after pronouncing these words, the Orator appeared to fall into a great agitation, which, increasing by degrees, became so violent that his face was all distorted & all his body in convulsions. At the same moment, he threw into the mouth of the young man something which, as to its color & form, resembled a small bean; & instantly the latter fell inert, as if he had received a pistol shot. The Chief behind him caught him in his arms; & with the help of the two others, laid him full length upon the ground, in a state absolutely like that of a man deprived of life.

After that, they commenced to rub his limbs, & strike upon his back blows more calculated to immolate the living than to revive the dead. During this singular operation, the Orator continued his harangue, & urged the spectators not to be surprised, & not to despair of the young man's return to life; adding that his condition was the effect of the violent operation of the Spirit on the faculties of one who had never before experienced anything of the kind.

The Candidate remained in fact several minutes insensible & without movement; but at last, after having received a great number of blows, he commenced to show some symptoms of life, which were followed by violent convulsions, & a kind of obstruction in the throat. But this was not of long duration; because having ejected from his mouth the bean or the I don't know what that the first Chief had thrown him, he appeared pretty well recovered.

I omit Carver's further description of what he saw as it agrees almost exactly with my own observations, which are detailed later. One thing he describes which I did not notice, was a whistling noise made by a wooden device set in the throat of the medicine bag, but I am in accord with him when he says that of all their ceremonies this is the most diverting to watch. In just the right setting, as I saw it in the earth lodge, well costumed, mysteriously lighted, it is primitive drama—without plot, understood—but with the illusion of the eerie and uncanny pretty well sustained.

The agent for the Winnebago, in his report for 1848, gives it as his opinion that the wonders of this dance are due to "mesmerism or magnetic influence," though he also suspects there may be "humbug and imposition," in both of which surmises I am inclined to agree with him, but as human nature loves the mysterious, and dislikes to be disillusioned, he neutralizes his reference to "humbug" by adding, "A careful observation of the ceremonies of this order for six years has been unable to detect the imposition, if there be one; and it is unreasonable to suppose that an imposition of this character could be practiced for centuries without detection."

The dance as I saw it in 1892, among the Omahas, was in the large earth lodge at Fire Chief's. Fire Chief himself was there but, owing to his age, as a spectator. His muslin shirt was ruffled around the neck and down the front, in the manner of so many chiefs who went to Washington in the early days, and had their portraits painted, government medal and all, by C. B. King. He also wore leggings of buckskin dyed black, with broad beaded strips and scalp lock fringes, tucked inside the upturned "wolf ears" of black moccasins. This ungainly fashion of wearing the moccasin flaps turned up seems at one time to have been more or less in vogue from the Atlantic coast westward as far as the Pawnees, of which tribe the Sioux regarded it as a distinguishing feature, along with the roached head. As one of the principal divisions of the Pawnee was the *Loup* [Wolf], the sign for Pawnee was to hold the first and second finger, joined and upright, above the ear, meaning "wolf," so that the term "wolf ears," as applied to the moccasin flaps, carried with it the suggestion of "Pawnee." On the other hand, the Pawnee themselves seem to have regarded the upturned flaps as symbolical of the leaves of the growing corn.

In one other particular I might feel tempted to criticize Fire Chief's dress, or, in this case, his toilet, for, in

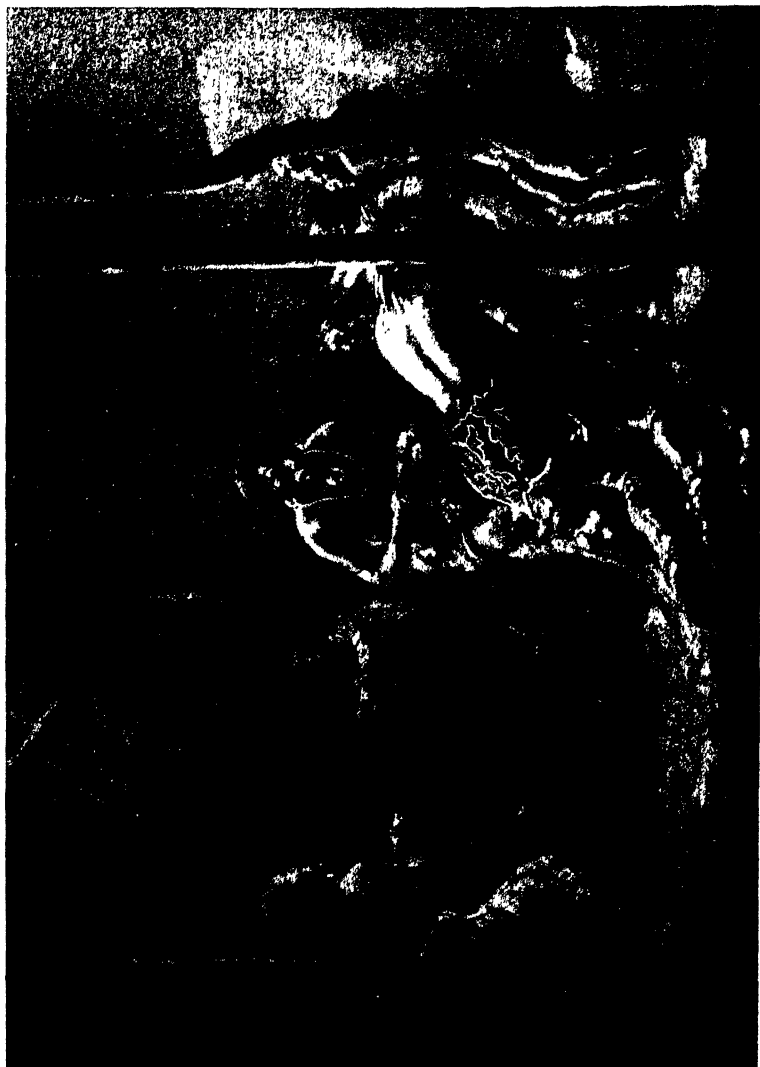
common with several other men of the tribe, he evidently had had his head roached some months before, and now he needed a "haircut." His hair was neither short nor long, and the ridge on top was an inch longer than the rest.

Also present was Fire Chief's son, *Han' a-ki'-pa* [Meet in the Dark], who, a year or two later, was reported to have been killed by a Winnebago. He was very active in the ceremonies, and seemingly was gifted with more of the magic power than any of the rest. He was a tall man, with skunk-skin garters below the knee of his buckskin leggings. Another man, six feet tall and somewhat corpulent, an impressive figure, in the mass, if in nothing else, wore buckskin leggings with very broad, heavily beaded flaps which trailed on the ground as he walked or danced. He appeared to hold second rank as a conjuror. There may have been, in all, eight or ten active participants.

All the male performers were naked above the waist, the females, of whom there were several, were fully and richly clothed in dresses of list cloth ornamented with beads and ribbon work, and of course there was the usual crowd of onlookers in everyday Indian garb.

The characteristic feature of the ceremonies, and the most interesting, was that in which the actors, men and women, "shoot," and, for the moment, "kill" each other.

Holding their medicine bags like a musket in bayonet exercise muzzle to the enemy, the dancers revolve about one another in irregular circles, uttering strange noises, not readily identifiable, but vaguely suggesting those which might conceivably be made by some wild animal. There is a stealthy craftiness in their manner. From time to time, with a quick, guttural "Ho!" or "*Hûi!*" such as one might use to startle a child, a performer thrusts the nose of his medicine bag in the face of an opponent, who falls to the ground, "shot," of course, by the magic *wacicka*. After a few moments of apparent unconsciousness, the stricken one stirs as though regaining his senses, raises himself on his



Medicine Dance at Fire Chief's (1892)

elbow, coughs a few times, seems to spit something into his hand, and with an exclamation of triumph bounds to his feet and continues the dance. Several shots may be loosed at nearly the same time, so that two or more men or women may be squirming on the ground at once.

Sometimes it happens that the "medicine" of the magician attacked is so strong that the "shot" has no effect, or that being on his guard, he counters instantly and saves himself. Then he and his antagonist will dance cautiously around one another with the confident smirk of boxers sparring for an opening. They may continue this pantomime for a minute or two, at intervals poking the mouths of their medicine bags at each other simultaneously, and slapping them in the palm of their hands to the accompaniment of sudden grunts, the missiles and the "Ho's!" and "Hû's!" presumably crashing together in mid-air. Whether they are thus rendered inert, or whether, with irresponsible power for mischief unimpaired, they continue their invisible course through space, I do not know, but I judge from what I saw later that they may do either. At all events, one of the contestants eventually catches his adversary off-guard, and with a quick jab and "Hûi!" sends him sprawling.

In one of these well-matched encounters the victor was *Han' a-kî'-pa*, evidently a magician of the first order. The vanquished must have been nearly his equal, and in addition an actor of ability, for his coughing and retching while ridding himself of the *wacicka* were in the highest degree realistic.

I speak of it as acting because nearly all I saw, with the notable exception of perhaps two of the participants, seemed to me to be acting, and some of it rather poor acting. Many of the dancers were approaching middle age, and several, I thought, were inclined to let themselves down gently when "shot." With the women, handsomely dressed, as they were, after their mode, this was especially

marked, as was their evident desire to avoid ungraceful and unladylike positions in falling. There was also on their part far less ostentation of the distressing symptoms attending the ejection of the *wacicka*.

But if most of them were pretending, there was one youth I must hasten to acquit of that charge. He was very much in earnest, and, I am inclined to think, a novice newly initiated. In addition, I believe him to have been a particularly easy hypnotic subject, a "sure-fire show-piece," and recognized as such by the older and more experienced members of the order. Evidently his coolly calculating opponent had so maneuvered and edged him over to my side of the lodge that he would fall precisely at my feet, so that I might get the full benefit of the demonstration. Pitching headlong at the "shot" as though he were really dead, his bare shoulder scraped so brutally against the rough-hewed support of the lodge that the white look of the scruffed skin was noticeable for the rest of the afternoon.

Without change of step, or a second look at the prostrate boy, the victor passed calmly on. Nobody paid any further attention to the stricken one, and in his own good time he came to, slightly dazed, and with no effort to act a part or impress the spectators.

Here, I am sure, was a genuine case of hypnosis. I could not help recalling a similar incident in which the subject was a young Frenchman who had asserted that he could not be hypnotized. He was knocked down with one swift gesture and the single syllable, "*Dors* [Sleep]." I say he was knocked down; it would be more exact to say that his knees flexed instantly, but he was caught, as he fell, by those standing at his elbows. The hypnotist, here, was a student named Michelet, who at that time, 1886-87, was at the Julian School of Art, in Paris.

The propounding of Mesmer's theory of "animal magnetism" in 1778, though still pretty wide of the mark, did

much toward absolving the devil in this matter, but as Carver, at the time of his travels, knew nothing of this, his reference to the devil need hardly be wondered at. As a matter of fact, I have seen the student, Michelet, without laying claim to supernatural or spirit aid of any sort, perform feats vastly more astonishing than any I witnessed among Indians. In other words, if the medicine men had a more complete understanding of their business they could stage a better show.

Since I am in a manner digressing, I may as well add that Indians also make use of something which may, or may not, be akin to hypnotism, but in an entirely different way. I have seen a Crow father put his two-year-old son to sleep by smoothing the child's brows with the ball of his thumbs, rubbing four or five times, very slowly and gently, from just above the nose outward, as one might do to smooth the knitted brows of care. The process took about six seconds.

Now, in the medicine lodge, we discover that all is not right. There has been a good deal of excitement, and some pretty wild shooting. As might be expected, some of the shots have gone astray. These must be gathered up to prevent their doing harm. It is rather an anxious moment for nobody knows as yet where they have gone, though everyone seems to await the outcome in full confidence that the medicine men will be able to recapture them. The *wacicka* may be embedded in the body of one of the bystanders without his or her knowledge, and if not removed will cause havoc, and eventually, death. Or it may be lying on the dirt floor in some unused part of the great lodge, wobbling and pulsating like a thing alive, as Indians assured me it had been seen to do.

A search is organized. One of the most capable magicians begins to dance, making short dashes from near the center of the lodge toward the outer wall, stopping somewhat in the likely places, or where the scent seems to

grow stronger, for he holds his medicine-bag nose to the ground, or nearly so, and his rapid, trotting dance from point to point, with its abrupt halts at intervals, as though baffled, is distinctly suggestive of the movements of a weasel, or some such beast restlessly hunting its prey.

He finishes each dash with an upward scoop of his medicine bag—evidently a random, tentative effort, for more often than not it fails to catch the *wacicka*—stops short and looks about him, returns to the middle of the lodge and repeats the performance, until at one of his scoops he announces his success by a whoop of triumph, holding his medicine bag high in the air, his hand tightly grasping its neck as if to prevent the escape of the captured missile.

Thus one of these dangerous objects is accounted for, but another still is missing. *Han' a-kʷ-pa* repeats the search until the nose of his medicine bag points to a group of spectators on the north side of the circle, but without indicating the position of the *wacicka* with sufficient exactness. The conjuror, therefore, is obliged to make another start from the center, his medicine bag again leading him to the same group of spectators, where, after vacillating from side to side like the needle of a compass, it points straight at a girl sixteen or eighteen years old, in whose body, of course, the missile is supposed to have lodged. She, with a set expression which gives little hint of her real feelings, is led forward by two determined-looking women who hold her by the arms as if to keep her from running away.

The magician, having returned to the middle of the lodge, once more advances with great show of earnestness and an exaggeration of the scooping motion, which begins at the girl's feet and ends above her head, recaptures the *wacicka*, and with an exultant exclamation, holds up his otter-skin bag with the same strangling grip on its throat. This ends the performance.

Nowadays there is a considerable portion of the tribe which disapproves of these dances and will not go near them. Even the skeptics—and there are varying degrees of skepticism—realize that the *Grande Médecine* Lodge, with the *wacicka* flying in all directions, is no fit place for them. As one young man remarked to me, "If they know you don't believe it they might shoot you."



The Iroquois Pantheon—The Grandfathers

LET US turn eastward now from the land of mirage and sagebrush, from the desert-dry wastes where the thin air shimmers in the sun like molten metal, to where the gentle swells of the horizon, distorted to the semblance of angular buttes, ebb and flow in the wavy atmosphere, changing, rolling from one to the other, approaching, merging, receding. From the badlands of pink, violet, and pale sage green, from the warm aromatic scent of juniper, fir, and mountain mahogany, from the sweeping uplands of bunch and buffalo grass, from this newer world, to that region of green hills, fertile valleys, and blue lakes which is central New York, home of the Six Nations.

Differing in many ways, each region is beautiful; the beauty of the one, that of fresh pigments somewhat strident and high-keyed; that of the other, the mellower tones of an older picture softened by age.

Here in this Eastern region, in the late eighteen-sixties, I saw my first Indians, Old Cynthia and *Dji-ga-na-yo'-za*, Onondaga women from the Castle, eighteen miles away, who came to the kitchen door in those fine days of autumn or early spring to sell their fancy baskets, beaded wall pockets, and pincushions; coarse beads coarsely worked over paper designs on black velvet, but to me, in those days, very Indian. It was one of those exciting events of



Iroquois girl in costume. Photographed at the Episcopal Mission of the Good Shepherd, Onondaga Castle, N. Y., 1882 by Leslie Smith, at the request of Mrs. Erminnie A. Smith. Such a dress was then worn only by some of the older women on gala occasions. The use of the silver brooches dates back two hundred years.

childhood which left an impression more vivid with me than the periodic visit of the tin peddler, or the rarer organ grinder and his monkey—Cynthia with her cherubic face and gray hair (I sat next to her spirit, years later, at a ghost feast in her honor); *Dji-ga-na-yo'-za*, younger, with her large pack basket and its burden strap, the leggings of both women showing below their calico skirts.

Once, when I was too young to remember, the younger woman had brought her small infant swaddled in its wrappings on a papoose board, with the thin, flat bow of hickory from which hung a silk handkerchief to shield the baby's eyes from the sun. Next year she came without the baby, and when my father asked, "Where is the papoose?" he received the laconic, but tearful answer, "Pig eat 'em." It seems that on one of her basket-peddling expeditions the mother had gone into a farmhouse near Oneida, leaving the baby on its board leaning against a tree, where some pigs found it and tore it to pieces.

Another of her children was a boy about my own age, a fact to which she never failed to allude, and which furnished a pretext for bringing me a small bow and arrow, succeeding years bringing other bows increasing in size and weight in proportion to my age.

The Onondagas (and the same is true of all the Iroquois), having had two centuries of more or less close contact with the whites, were very different from the Western tribes I came to know later. Neither in their manner of living nor in their everyday dress and dwellings did they differ widely from their white neighbors, though some of their older houses were of squared logs, and I even recall one which had the primitive bark roof. Many, or most, however, were of frame, and there were some good barns.

Practically all of these people spoke fair to good English, but among themselves they preferred to use their own language. Born musicians all, there were some with very

limited knowledge of print or script who nonetheless could read a musical score at sight and play several instruments. At one time, with a population of about five hundred, the reservation could muster two brass bands and a small stringed orchestra, and many of their selections were well beyond the ability of the average country band. One man, whose English name was George George (familiarly called Double George), was a music teacher of some note, and had pupils in the neighboring white communities.

The inclusion of sophisticated compositions in the Onondaga band's repertory, about 1887, marked a departure from bucolic simplicity, and strangely enough the innovation was sponsored by a leader who was one of the "Old," or Conservative Party, and a resolute defender of the native music, whose rendering of the ceremonial chants surpassed all others. Through his urging the band members could be heard practicing in the summer twilight, and ever and anon *Walbali's* bass horn boomed the monotonous second part of "La Paloma," the final result being an organization which carried off the honors at State fairs, and other meetings where country bands compete.

But this proficiency in the white man's music did not spring full-blown into being in the latter half of the nineteenth century; its roots ran farther back. Traces of its burgeoning appear as early as 1775, when Cresswell discovered an Indian in Ohio making pretty good music on a tin fiddle. Chateaubriand, too, in 1791, found a Frenchman of the old school, M. Violet (ancient scullion to General Rochambeau), powdered and curled, apple-green coat, *jabots* and *manchettes*, giving dancing lessons to twenty Indians in a barn somewhere between the upper Mohawk and Onondaga Lake. His pupils, to whom he always referred as "*Ces messieurs sauvages et ces dames sauvagesses*," were dressed in Indian costume, the men half-naked, painted, and plumed. It was not the native dances M. Violet taught, but the erstwhile fashionable

Madelon Friquet, and the music was provided by a *violon de poche*, one of those absurd little violins with a body so diminutive as to fit the pocket of the dancing master's coat.

Thus early were the Iroquois learning the rhythm of the white man's music, and imbibing, along with his drink, some inkling of his customs and his religion. The fiddle ("invention of the Evil One"), "Yankee notions," and Yankee dances were debauching the young and befuddling the old. There was no longer that intense pride of race. With the success of the American Revolution had come the downfall of military supremacy for the Six Nations, and with it the twilight of the native gods whose inadequacy was now proved. The old order was changing, and the future held no promise.

At such times, in the gloom of national defeat, dreamers are born, and prophets rise up to tell the people what they must do to be saved. There have been many such among Indians, but in nearly every case their influence has lasted only as long as the conditions which brought them forth. An exception in this respect was the Iroquois prophet *Ga-ni-a-ta'-io* [Handsome Lake], who died at Onondaga Castle, New York, in 1815, and was buried under the "old" or smaller council house, the religion he taught having lasted a hundred and fifty years, and bidding fair to last for some time to come. It is said to have been revealed by the Four Persons, who appeared to him in a vision, and, judged on its merits (as we must judge all faiths) and not by the limitations and inconsistencies of its devotees, it is a religion of a high order; that is to say, of course, in comparison not only with other native American cults, but with religions in general the world over.

Iroquois religious concepts are based on principles so widely different from our own that a satisfactory explanation of them would fill a separate volume. A bare allusion to some of the salient features is all we can attempt

here, but the deeper student of comparative religion will find the information in the works of such authorities as Arthur Caswell Parker and J. N. B. Hewitt. The few facts I give are from my own observation, and what the Indians told me, written down at the time, some years before the appearance of Hewitt's reports. Where there are discrepancies I have let them stand for what they are worth, as coming from Indian sources, but, excepting statements based on visual evidence, I should not hesitate to credit Hewitt with the greater accuracy. Probably not all Indians (nor, for that matter, all white men) are able to explain their religion, and even the most capable may differ in their interpretations. Theory, also, though it be never so right, may differ from observed fact, as in the white-dog sacrifice, where, as Hewitt describes, the east and west doors of the council house are used according to a fixed ceremonial rule, though as a matter of fact at Onondaga the doors are not east and west at all, as they should be, theoretically, but north and south. It is that unaccountable difference we often remark between things as they are and things as they ought to be.

While the Iroquois seem to have no definite idea of omnipotence, or even of pre-eminence among their deities, the "Pagan" Onondagas usually enumerate them in the following order:

Sa-gwai-yat-di-sai' [The Creator].

Tain-hi-a-waq'-gi [The Holder of the Heavens].

Gai-ye'-ni-un-gwe-ta-ge' [The Four Persons (the four "men," or angels who appeared to Handsome Lake in a vision)].

Ga-aqk'-kwa [The Sun].

A-sun-be'-kwa Ga-aqk'-kwa [The Moon (literally "night sun")].

The *Hon-to'-i* [a race, or class of supernatural beings to be described later].

After these, possibly, several demi-gods, or culture

heroes, such as *Hai-en-hwat'-ha* [Hiawatha], and *To-do-tda'-bo*. How many others there may be in the pantheon of the Pagan Onondagas I would not presume to say, and I am not sure that the earth, the water, and the other elements in nature should not be included, for they seem to be objects of veneration if not of worship. The sun and moon are personified, and the other gods are distinctly anthropomorphic; in fact, thoroughly human in their needs and, to a certain extent, their limitations. *To-do-tda'-bo*, according to the myth, was originally covered with serpents which grew from the head and other parts of his body, but these were cut off by the people of his day, leaving him much like other men in appearance. Even the *Hon-to'-i* (who perhaps should not be classed as gods), are human in form, though hideously deformed and distorted, but without wings, horns, tails or other such animal features as are considered necessary by many primitive peoples to convey the idea of superhuman power.

I have a notion that *Sa-gwai-yat-di-sai'* ['The Creator] may be another name for *Tain-bi-a-waq'-gi* [Holder of the Sky (who is also a creator)], and that the two may be identical, though my Onondaga informants made it quite clear that they considered them two distinct persons. One young man (probably with a desire to reconcile their religion with Christianity) told me that *Sa-gwai-yat-di-sai'* ['The Creator] is the same as *Ha-wā-ni-o* (the name given by the Christian portion of the community to Jehovah), and that *Tain-bi-a-waq'-gi* is the same as *Ha-wā-ni-o Ho-ha'-wa* [Son of *Ha-wā-ni-o* (i.e., *Jesus Christ*)], but this is misleading. The Creator and Jehovah might logically be regarded as one and the same, but there is nothing to justify the assertion that the Holder of the Heavens is the same as Christ, nor do the Pagans, so far as I recall, use the names *Ha-wā-ni-o* or *Ha-wā-ni-o Ho-ha'-wa* in their ceremonies.

I have been careful to speak of "Pagan" Onondagas,

because this is the term commonly used to designate the followers of the faith of Handsome Lake, and because in every tribe in the United States today there is a certain proportion of Christians, and among the Onondagas, as among all the Iroquois, this proportion is large. It is necessary to mark the distinction as few statements in regard to the one would be true of the other, although both Christian and Pagan Onondagas hold a common belief in a life of reward or punishment after death, and in hell and the devil, and the same might be said with almost equal truth of the belief in witchcraft. Hell they call *O-ni'-sun*, and, not wishing to mention his name, they tactfully referred to the devil as *O-ni'-sun he'-nun* [*He of Hell, or the One Who Lives in Hell*].

The Pagan observances consist mostly of chants, burnt offerings, and ceremonial dancing varied with harangues, litanies (if they may be so called), and sermonizing. These take place in the long frame building called the council house [*Ga-nun-sis*, *The Long House*], though during the Dream Feast, when the clans are divided in two groups, some of these rites are performed by one group in a smaller building called the old council house.

One of the best known of these ceremonies was the sacrifice of the white dog, but this has been discontinued for some years, a small basket hung with bright ribbons, and containing tobacco, a few beads of the old-shell wampum, and other trinkets being now substituted for the dog, and burnt in its stead but the former ceremonial rites are observed.

On the whole, for one having but a limited knowledge of the language, these observances are rather tedious to witness but the performances of the *Hon-to'-i* introduce a comic note into the deadly seriousness of the rest, and are so spectacular and pantomimic that no understanding of the language is needed to find them amusing. It should be borne in mind that in this account I am describing

things as they were in the decade ending about 1891; what changes there may have been since then I do not know.

The *Hon-to'-i* (*bat-to'-i*, singular; *bon-to'-i*, plural) are a race of supernatural beings of the size and form of a man, but extremely hideous. Their faces are distorted and discolored as though from pain or anger, their mouths twisted, their noses broken, crooked, or abnormally long, and their eyes fiercely glaring. In old times, it is said, there were many of them in the surrounding country, especially at the Green Lakes, near Jamesville, New York, where they were occasionally seen to disappear in the solid rock, but of late years they are believed to have retired to the wilder regions of the remote North and West. They are simple-minded creatures who cause illness and suffering, sometimes through malice toward humanity, perhaps, but more often, it would seem, from a sort of stupid, or apathetic indifference in the control of their miraculous power. They are, I take it, somewhat like a thoughtless boy who is given a gun as a plaything, and who through mischief or carelessness endangers the lives and well-being of the neighbors, but with the difference that the *Hon-to'-i* are able, and quite willing, when their attention is called to the matter, and they are properly propitiated, to mend the damage they have caused in those instances where reparations can be made.

That the magic of the *Hon-to'-i* is great, greater even than that of *Tain-bi-a-waq'-gi*, may be inferred from the following legend:

A long time ago *Hat-to'-i* and The Holder of the Heavens stood near a wooded hill, boasting to each other of their magic power. The Holder of the Heavens said: "That tree standing over there, I can kill it so all its branches will wither." He then tried to do as he had said, but succeeded in blighting only about half its branches, whereupon *Hat-to'-i* replied: "If that is the best you can do I am the stronger, for I can kill many trees, and make that hill move toward me!" The Holder of the Heavens answered: "If that is true then

you are indeed stronger than I." So *Hat-to'-i* crawled about on the ground, grunted, shook his rattle and danced; the trees died, and the hill moved toward him till it came very close. [It will be noticed that the two are testing their ability to destroy, for primitive peoples often pay greater homage to deities who are inclined to injure them than to those who are beneficent,] The Holder of the Heavens admitted himself beaten, and *Hat-to'-i* then asked him what use he intended making of his miraculous power. The Holder of the Heavens answered that he would use it to benefit mankind, and save them from misfortune and suffering. *Hat-to'-i* said he too would save them from suffering, and would drive away witches and disease, but only on condition that people show him proper reverence and do as he wished. Whenever a man had any "red" disease, such as hemorrhage or nose-bleed he would take it away if the man would give him *o-yenk'-wa on'-we* [Indian tobacco; literally, "real tobacco"], and make a feast for him of *o-djis'-kwa* [white corn-meal mush] with a gravy of deer tallow or bear's grease.

This belief, together with a commendable desire to insure the health and safety of the community by conciliating the *Hon-to'-i*, explains the existence among these Indians of a secret society bearing that name, whose members, when masked to personate these supernatural beings, are believed to be endowed with all their marvelous power. That this organization is not of recent origin is evident from what the Jesuit missionary, Le Mercier, observed in 1637 among the Hurons, who were of the same linguistic stock as the Iroquois, and of similar culture. The quotation is translated from *Relation des Jésuites*, Québec, 1858:

The 10th of February [says Le Mercier] a dance was held for the recovery of a sick person. It had been two days since they had had the dream, and had been working on the preparations; all the dancers imitated humpbacks, with altogether ridiculous wooden masks, and each carried a stick in his hand; *voilà une excellente médecine*. At the end of the dance, at the command of Tsondacouane, the sorcerer, all these masks were hung at the top of a pole, one above each cabin, with figures of straw at the doors, to frighten the malady and terrify the demons who were causing them to die.



Courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History.

Dance of the Hontoi. Drawing by DeCost Smith.

In 1743 John Bartram visited Onondaga, and was lodged in the council house. He tells us:*

At night soon after we were laid down to sleep, and our fire almost burnt out, we were entertained by a comical fellow, disguised in as odd a dress as Indian folly could invent; he had on a clumsy vizard of wood colour'd black, with a nose 4 or 5 inches long, a grining mouth set awry, furnished with long teeth, round the eyes circles of bright brass, surrounded by a larger circle of white paint, from his forehead hung long tresses of buffaloes hair, and from the catch part of his head ropes made of the plated husks of *Indian* corn; I cannot recollect the whole of his dress, but that it was equally uncouth; he carried in one hand a long staff, in the other a calabash with small stones in it, for a rattle, and this he rubbed up and down his staff; he would sometimes hold up his head and make a hideous noise like the braying of an ass; he came in at the further end, and made this noise at the first, whether it was because he would not surprise us too suddenly I can't say: I ask'd *Conrad Weiser*, who as well as myself lay next the alley, what noise that was? and *Shicklamy* the *Indian* chief, our companion, who I supposed, thought me somewhat scared, called out, lye still *John*. I never heard him speak so much plain *English* before. The jack pudding presently came up to us, and an *Indian* boy came with him and kindled our fire, that we might see his glittering eyes and antick postures as he hobbled round the fire, sometimes he would turn the Buffaloes hair on one side that we might take the better view of his ill-favored phiz, when he had tired himself, which was sometime after he had well tired us, the boy that attended him struck 2 or 3 smart blows on the floor, at which the hobgoblin seemed surprised and on repeating them he jumped fairly out of doors and disappeared. I suppose this was to divert us and get some tobacco for himself, for as he danced about he would hold out his hand to any he came by to receive this gratification which as often as anyone gave him he would return an awkward compliment. By this I found it no new diversion to any one but myself. In my whim I saw a vizard of this kind hang by the side of one of their cabins to another town.

Though he seems to have missed the significance of the performance, Bartram's account of the dress and actions of this *Hat-to'-i* is wonderfully vivid. These Indians do not now hang masks on the outside of their homes, nor, as

* Bartram, John, *Observations—made by John Bartram in his travels from Pennsylvania to Onondaga, etc.* (London: 1751. Reprint, Geneva, N. Y., 1895).

far as I know, use the gourd rattle in connection with the *Hon-to'-i* (though it is used on other occasions), but with these exceptions the description is true to the letter of what I have seen at Onondaga in recent years. As the ceremonies at which the *Hon-to'-i* appear occur almost exclusively at night, and in midwinter, few white people have seen them. While special circumstances may require their services at other seasons, they are only to be seen regularly at the New Year's ceremonies, and then only on three days in each year. That I have witnessed their dances repeatedly during this inclement season, and at what might seem unreasonable hours, is due to the fact that I lived in an Onondaga family the greater part of three successive winters, though during several preceding years I had made many visits to these people, stopping with them frequently for weeks at a time, without discovering any evidence that such ceremonies still survived among them.

The secret order of *Hon-to'-i* is composed of young men from fifteen to thirty years old, and though by a sort of time-honored fiction their identity is lost in the disguise they assume, there is in reality no great mystery on this point, for even I could recognize some of the dancers in spite of their mummery. Not only that, but I discovered in time that one who thought his performance had been rather clever felt complimented on being told, later, that he had been recognized.

This fact, however, detracts nothing from the awe in which they are held, for while wearing the mask and disguise they are believed to be fully empowered with the marvelous ability of the supernatural beings they impersonate, to cure disease, and to scare and thwart the machinations of witches. They are also able, like their superhuman prototypes, to expose themselves to the hottest fires without being burned. There is a story of one newly initiated member of the order, who on his first appearance in the council house was seized with a sort of frenzy, and

before he could be held back had dashed into the open fire, flinging out the blazing logs with his bare hands, digging with his fingers among the hot coals, and finally replacing the logs without receiving any injury whatever. Arthur Caswell Parker, State Anthropologist at Albany at the time of the fire in the capitol building, told me that a number of Iroquois masks on exhibition there were slightly scorched but not seriously damaged. The Indians on hearing of this were not in the least surprised; it merely proved what they had always known, that fire cannot harm the *Hon-to'-i*. In fact much of the power of the *Hon-to'-i* seems to attach to the mask itself, and for this reason it must be treated in a certain prescribed manner to avoid evil consequences, and no person unless a member of the society would dare to wear a mask for fear of the delirium which would surely seize upon him as a punishment for his temerity.

When not in use the mask must be kept hidden, and lying face down. To leave it face up would be an intimation that it is considered dead, an inference which it would very naturally resent, and if left face out it would be likely to injure those who come within its range of vision, and especially any who might pretend to have lost faith in the *Hon-to'-i*, and have ceased to pay them homage.

At one time my studio in Skaneateles had a dozen or more masks hanging on its walls, face out of course, but my Onondaga model, who slept there, insisted on turning their faces to the wall, a procedure in which I was obliged to acquiesce as long as he stayed. At other times Indian ginseng hunters, on their way to or from the wooded ravines toward the head of the lake, would ask for a lodging for the night, and would be allowed to sleep in the studio. Invariably, next morning, all the masks would be turned to the wall, or taken down entirely and hidden face down in some corner.

If the mask is danced and feasted at proper intervals it will give no trouble, but if neglected it is likely to revenge itself on members of the household. There is the case, for instance, of the woman who was afflicted with a crooked mouth which grew worse and worse till someone bethought him of a mask which had long lain unused. This having been appeased in the prescribed manner, the twisted mouth regained its normal symmetry.

If it is not possible to have the mask take part in a feast or dance it may be kept in good humor by sprinkling in the fire a little *o-yenk'-wa on'-we*, or real tobacco, a pinch at a time, allowing a brief interval for each pinch to burn, at the same time uttering a short invocation. A small bag of the tobacco should also be tied to the mask, and its lips rubbed with grease. This should be repeated about three times a year. How often have I neglected this precaution, though it was impressed upon me almost every time I took a mask away from the reservation, and I was fortunate in being able to collect many of the oldest and best ones at Onondaga. Three of these are, or were, in the Royal-Imperial Museum in Berlin, one I gave to Dr. Wm. M. Beauchamp, one to Mr. Joseph Keppler, and the rest, except one large and one miniature example, which I kept for what might be termed sentimental reasons, are in the American Museum of Natural History, New York.

The "real" tobacco is the native *Nicotiana rustica*, and is grown almost exclusively for ceremonial purposes, though sometimes smoked by the old people on ordinary occasions. It grows to a height of about thirty inches, has a yellowish blossom, and the leaf, six or seven inches in length, is broad and heart-shaped. It is interesting to note that the word *on'-we*, "real," has, in such combinations, become synonymous with our adjective "Indian," as *ba-ta'-kwa on'-we* [real shoes (i.e., moccasins)] and *on'-gwe on'-we* [real man (an Indian)].

The masks are called *ga-gun'sa*, and in English are

generally known as "false faces." Carved of some light wood—whitewood, butternut, or pine—some of them show considerable originality and artistic invention, though there are certain fairly constant features, the large, glaring eyes made of disks, or ovoid pieces of tin, brass, or copper, the exaggerated nose, and especially the protruding lips, sometimes pursed into a form suggesting puffing or blowing. Sometimes the mouth is crooked, sometimes it is set with teeth made of wooden pegs, the teeth of animals, or bits of shell, and often the tongue is hanging out as if the *Hat-to'-i* were choking with pain or rage. As a rule the top and sides are hung with horse hair, but at times braided corn husks are used, especially at the back, as Bartram says.

The intention, of courses, is to make the mask as terrifying as possible (if I had not learned to choose my words with some care I should be tempted to say "diabolical") for I was not long in discovering that the Pagan element among the Onondagas object to anything that might tend to bring upon them a charge of devil worship. They tell of a *Hat-to'-i* who appeared in the council house with horns attached to his mask, and a tail arranged so it could be lashed from side to side by a system of hidden strings, but one of the chiefs reproved him, and told him to leave at once, and not return till he had removed the objectionable features. As a matter of fact, many of the Christian Onondagas admit the power of the *Hon-to'-i* to work wonderful cures, but they say, "It is done by the help of the devil."

Years ago, in a short paper, I made the mistake, in speaking of the *Hon-to'-i* and their activities, of using the terms "evil beings," "demons," and "devil dances," assuming that supernatural beings who would willingly cause suffering to humanity must be demons or devils, but

* Smith, DeCost, "Witchcraft and Demonism of the Modern Iroquois," *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, Vol I, No. 3.

this I found was not in accordance with the views of my pagan Onondaga friends, and I made a correction in a later article. Moreover, a fuller study shows that primitive reasoning does not necessarily call for such a sweeping conclusion.

Many Italians believe to this day that certain persons (and sometimes very exalted and benevolent persons) have the evil eye, and without their intent or knowledge their mere gaze brings misfortune.

Apollo, god of many beautiful and desirable things, including youth, music, poetry, and healing, was also the sender and stayer of plagues.

In the Middle Ages the Christian saints were also popularly believed to send diseases among men. Some, indeed, specialized in certain forms of ailment, so that those afflicted with that particular sickness would make their votive offerings to the saint believed responsible for it on the theory that he who sent it could also take it away.

According to Rabelais, who, though an incorrigible joker, allows us to read between his lines something of the manners and customs of this time, St. Sebastian was considered to be responsible for the pest, or plague; "St. Anthony put fire in the legs; St. Eutrope caused dropsy; St. Gildas, madness; St. Genou, gout," but this preposterous belief is denounced by Grandgousier as absurd and blasphemous. This much in Rabelais' text, but the footnotes of the Firmin-Didot edition, Paris, 1884, give further evidence of such beliefs in the sixteenth century.

We see, therefore, that the Pagan Iroquois might very naturally protest against any suggestion that their *Honto'-i* are devils, or that they are devil worshippers, if for no other reason, because it would provide such a handy argument for their religiopolitical opponents.

Comparisons of religions are odious (unless they are religions of the mumbo-jumbo order, in which case we may say what we like of them), but let us honestly ask our-



"The Grandfathers."



Iroquois medicine masks and turtle shell rattle from Onondaga Castle, N. Y. Cupping horn,
Omaha.

selves what would happen if an intelligent Iroquois, having no knowledge of any religion but his own, were to stumble on this utterance of Habakkuk: "Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals [or *burning diseases*] went forth at his feet?" We, of course, take it, not too literally, as the grandiose rhetoric of an ancient prophet, but could we blame the Iroquois if he mistook it for a reference to a super *Hat-to'-i*?

Whether the *Hon-to'-i* are hobgoblins, jackpuddings, demons, or what not, and whether the ceremonies performed in their honor may properly be classed as worship the reader must decide. At any rate, in order to avoid the pitfalls of searching for an English equivalent where apparently there is none, we must continue, in spite of the repetition involved, to use the term *Hat-to'-i*, because the good name of a friendly people is involved.

A candidate for membership in the order must have had a dream indicating the need of his joining it, or have been cured by the *Hon-to'-i* of some ailment within their control, especially some "red" disease, bleeding, swelling, or inflammation. He then makes an offering of real tobacco, which is burnt in the fire for the greater, the supernatural *Hon-to'-i*, and offers to the members of the order a more material feast of the usual white-corn mush with grease or gravy, after which he is received among them on an equal footing, and, sometimes, a miniature mask is sent him in notification of the fact.

As already remarked, the most spectacular performances of the *Hon-to'-i* are during the New Year festival, or Dream Feast, in January, some years extending into early February. On their first and second appearances they "scare witches," and on the third they visit the various houses in the morning to drive away sickness, and the afternoon of the same day dance at the council house for the cure of all sick persons able to attend.

Two successive nights, usually Saturday and Sunday,

during the Dream Feast, are devoted to the witch scaring. A collection of plug tobacco is made, this as a treat to the dancers, then real tobacco is burnt as an offering to the greater *Hon-to'-i* that they may look with favor upon the proceedings, and of course the usual feast for the maskers has already been prepared.

Within the dimly lighted council house the people wait; children wide eyed, their elders in amused, if respectful, anticipation. Toward nine o'clock, when the time has begun to drag, an unearthly grunting, rendered the more uncanny at first by the softening effect of distance, slowly approaches. There is a subdued murmur: "Our Grandfathers are coming." The children sit straighter in their seats. Now a creaking of footsteps on the frozen snow, a scraping of staves and rattles along the clapboards, and suddenly the door is pushed rudely open. In a gust of wintry air and powdery snow some twenty grotesque creatures burst in, crawling on all fours, grunting, surging, and scurrying like huge spiders toward the fire where the sacred tobacco is smoldering. A chief stands ready to restrain them, lest in their eagerness to get the tobacco they plunge headlong into the fire, and scatter the live coals in all directions. A struggle follows, but by soothing words, and a promise of tobacco and a feast for all, the leader is soon persuaded to calm his followers, who are then drawn up in line, and a piece of plug tobacco is given to each. Then the chief, taking a rattle from one of the *Hon-to'-i*, beats time with it while they dance with many outbursts of grunts.

This noise is hard to describe, but might be rendered by the syllables, "*Hân-hân-hân-hân*," sometimes low in tone, sometimes higher, or with a note of querulousness, or interrogation. Unlike any other earthly sound, human or animal, inanelly stupid, if at times truculent, it seems so exactly fitted to the character that it would be hard to imagine *Hat-to'-i* making any other. It is, in fact, the

only form of speech of which these creatures are capable. They do not articulate words, but by modifying the tone or inflection of their characteristic exclamation, can express assent, dissent, approval, surprise, etc., in a most amusing way.

Although the *Hon-to'-i* are genuinely feared, and addressed as "Grandfathers," and by similar terms of respect, a great part of this witch scaring is pure buffoonery, some of it, in fact, excellent clowning. Many of their movements, too, are unconsciously comic; the eye holes of the masks being too near, or too far apart, or for some other reason not coming in the direct line of sight, cause the wearer to hold his head up, down, or sidewise, in order to see where he is going.

Hampered by obstructed vision, by their sticks, pestles, rattles, trailing tresses of husk or horsehair, and the humps, bumps, and tag ends of their disguise, there is the ever present likelihood of some grotesque stumbling or becoming entangled and falling down, and this is always good for a robustious laugh. On a day following one of these demonstrations I met a young fellow with a strained ankle, hobbling along with a cane. When asked what was the trouble, he answered: "Too much *Hân-hân*."

Another thing, their inability to express themselves except by signs or grunts adds not a little to the fun.

A dignified chief, after welcoming the *Hon-to'-i*, now asks them whence they have come. (The chief's manner is kindly and deferential, but with a tinge of the patronizing good nature one adopts in trying to make friends with a bashful child.) The *Hat-to'-i* answers with a grunt and a wide gesture toward the northwest. (The chief's manner indicates great interest.) "Is there much snow there?" A very positive grunt and vigorous nodding of the head, with appropriate gestures (which by the way are similar to those of the Western sign language) show that the snow in that quarter is indeed very deep. (Surprise and addi-

tional interest on the part of the chief.) "Have you come far?" (The same grunting and nodding in assent.) "Did you walk here?" (Negative shaking of the head and grunting.) "But the rivers and lakes are frozen; you could not have come by canoe. How did you come then?" The *Hat-to'-i* throws up his head and whistles like a locomotive, moves his arms like piston rods, shuffles his feet like driving wheels, puffs like escaping steam, moves a few feet forward and stops. "Oh, I understand. You came on the railroad." The *Hat-to'-i* grunts loudly at having made himself understood, and everybody laughs heartily.

Later, in commenting on this pantomime with the man I guessed to have been the chief actor, I asked what he supposed would happen if a party of real *Hon-to'-i* were actually to journey to Onondaga by train. Greatly amused, he pictured the conductor's futile efforts to find out their destination and collect fares, the only answer to all the questions being "*Hân-hân-hân-hân*," and frantic gestures.

Throughout the rest of the evening the *Hon-to'-i* are bribed with small cubes of plug tobacco to perform whatever antics the ingenuity of the spectators may suggest, and it is curious to note that by far the greater part are imitations of the white man's sports, occupations, and inventions, especially those which snort, sputter, vibrate, or revolve. There will be skaters, squads of militia, brass bands, "caliope" steam whistles, balky oxen with their driver, threshing machines, and so on. I should be disappointed if the program, nowadays, did not include the motorcar, airplane, radio, and of course a trolley car, for we are only seven miles from Syracuse, and I am told there is a trolley line to within two miles of the council house.

During all this tomfoolery one has an uneasy feeling that the crowd is making sport of these simple grandfathers, and treating them with scant respect, but it is more probable that the tobacco offering and the feast of mush have put the *Hon-to'-i* in good humor, and when in

playful mood they are a likable, fun-loving folk, enjoying the merriment in their naïve way quite as much as the spectators.

The first eruption of the maskers, followed by the short, spirited dance, is certainly Indian enough. It passes so quickly there is no time for disillusion. What Bartram saw, two hundred years ago, we now see, but on a larger scale, twenty to one; a score of uncanny creatures swaying, struggling, dancing; the same "grinning" mouths, the same huge eyes glowing and flashing. The turtle-shell rattle described by Père Lafitau in 1724 is here also, and, omitting the kerosene lamps, the modern clothes of the spectators, and one or two other anachronisms, it is precisely the scene pictured for us by Le Mercier in 1637.

The rattles are made from the snapping turtle, *Chelydra serpentina*, a beast symbolizing longevity, and possessing such tenacity of life and other mysterious traits it is little wonder it is selected to make "medicine rattles." To make a rattle the turtle is hung up by the neck and left till the following day, for it is said that no matter how early in the morning it is strangled it will not die until sundown. Next day, though seemingly as dead as anything can well be, even after the head is severed from the neck, the body removed from the shell, and the heart cut out, that strange, squarish organ will beat whenever touched. A stick is fitted in lieu of neck, to serve as a handle; some kernels of dry corn are put in the shell; the skin is sewed up, and the instrument, after drying, is ready for use. A hickory-bark rattle of true antiquity is sometimes carried instead of the turtle shell.

But the pantomime of "jack puddings," like most extemporized shows, drags somewhat in spots, and allows time for analysis of costume and surroundings. The council house, hung with common wallpaper, is heated, not by fireplaces as formerly, but by a box stove at the men's end, and, at the women's, a kitchen stove of recent model, use-

ful in preparing the feast, and admirably suited, with its complicated array of feed door, oven door, ash pit, lids, griddles, drafts, dampers and gadgets to play the part (as it has just done) of hypothetical steam engine to a *Hat-to'-i* engineer. For the rest the audience is composed of dark-complexioned farmers, the women in the farther group alone retaining in their somber costume a few dashes of the bright color we have always associated with aboriginal dress. One or two of the older ones are smoking clay pipes.

Both nights on which the *Hon-to'-i* appear they first visit the "old" council house (the clans being divided for the Dream Feast), and then come to the larger, or "new," council house, but in both buildings the performance is the same. Their third appearance is some ten days after the witch scaring, and at this time the people are reunited in the large council house.

During the early part of the day a straggling line of *Hon-to'-i*, each with staff or corn pestle, and a rattle, may be seen making their way from house to house to drive away witches and sickness. The effect is disappointing. The *Hon-to'-i* are but ragamuffins now, ridiculous, pathetic almost, in their squalid tatters. The pitiless mid-winter sunlight, diffused and searching, dispels all mystery. The stout winter moccasins, which at first appeared to be of thick buckskin with rawhide soles, are most likely made of old boot legs, while the rest of the costume, which could be recruited from any well-stocked rag bag, is stuffed with baskets, pans, or bunches of straw, belted and tied to counterfeit humps and other deformities.

But even on the main road there are few to see them. George Button's Cardiff-Syracuse stage, now on runners, and possibly with a shovel or two lashed on the side in case of snowdrifts, went by earlier in the morning, and any farmer on his bobsleigh who chances to pass them, floundering through the drifts at the edge of the broken track, grins good-naturedly and whips up his team without

realizing in the least that they are beings of miraculous attributes.

But wait; toward four o'clock in the afternoon the fading light will be more kind. It is then they invade the council house, and dance until dusk. During the progress of this dance no one is allowed to leave the building; a guard in a husk mask standing at the door, prevents all egress. The dancers receive no tobacco, but the usual offering of real tobacco is burnt in the stove at the women's end, and a kettle of the inevitable mush is given them, which they take outside to eat.

During their absence benches are placed in a semi-circle before the stove and on these a number of women who wish to be cured take their seats. In a short time the dancers return, walk round the stove, and after passing their hands through the ashes, rub them, each in turn, on the heads of the women, finishing the operation by blowing off the ashes that remain in the hair. The benches are now removed, and each *Hat-to'-i* dances with one of the women, after which those present, *Hon-to'-i* and all, dance once around the council house. The door is then opened and the people disperse.

One evening in summer I was invited to witness the cure, in her own home, of a woman said to be suffering from erysipelas. That troublesome disease, often difficult for our own physicians, was a simple matter for the *Hon-to'-i*.

Here a dozen persons of both sexes awaited the coming of the *Hon-to'-i*, who, judging by the sounds, were disguising themselves behind a clump of bushes near the house. The family and invited guests conversed in subdued tones; in an adjoining room a woman was preparing corn mush. A saucer of real tobacco was passed to a man who powdered it between his fingers, and sprinkled it, a little at a time, in the fire, uttering after each oblation an invocation which was barely audible. The levity which characterizes the

witch scaring is entirely lacking on those occasions when the aid of the grandfathers is invoked to cure illness. In this ceremony, and in that last described as taking place in the "long house," all present behaved decorously and reverently.

After the patient had seated herself in a chair before the stove, the door flew open, and four *Hon-to'-i* crawled in. Going to the stove, they passed their hands through the ashes, rubbed them on the woman's head, grunting continuously through their thick wooden lips, and finally blew away the loose ash. This operation was repeated by the other persons present but without the grunting and posturing, and while someone beat time the maskers danced, and then withdrew. Returning once more, the woman's head was again rubbed with ashes, which were in turn blown off. Then, suddenly stooping, each of the four grasped a corner of the chair, and raising it, the patient still seated, to about level with their elbows, danced vigorously with their burden, turning her once completely round, and setting her down—*cured*. The doctors' fees were extremely moderate, consisting of a portion of mush, a slice of salt pork, and a piece of bread in a separate pail for each.

It is said that in old times the bread given to the *Hon-to'-i* was made of meal mixed with *o-nä+'-sa*, which from the description given by the Indians seems to be some small white fungus which grows on decayed hemlock logs in damp woods. A fit food, one would say, for these primitive dwellers in woods and rocks, but even their tastes must change with the years, for my informant hastened to add that nobody at the present day, not even the *Hon-to'-i*, would eat bread containing *o-nä+'-sa*.



Onondaga, Keeper of the Faith

CONNECTED as it is with dances of masked medicine men and ceremonies obviously Indian, one might expect to find in Iroquois witchcraft something purely aboriginal, but this is not so. Except for a few unimportant holdovers from the primitive belief, it is today precisely that of our Puritan ancestors of two hundred-odd years ago. The Iroquois have taken over the witchcraft of old New England intact, and preserved it unimpaired to our day.

This is not to deny that these Indians had from the first their own belief in personal magic. They had their *manitos* (an Algonkin term), their friendly spirits ("familiar," the whites would have called them), and with the help of these they believed they could overcome obstacles, avoid wounds, and thwart their enemies. This was a part of their religion. To possess strong magic was to be respected, to be feared even, by those on a less secure footing with the supernatural. For an individual to use his miraculous power in his own interest, or in that of his friends, was not only natural and proper, but praiseworthy. For an opponent to use similar magic against *him* was not so good, yet his opponent, by all rules of logic, was within his rights in doing so.

One who had not the magic to protect himself against a rival might without impropriety call on someone more

powerful to work the spell for him. In either case it was regarded as a personal affair, and unless some malicious sorcerer, within or without the tribe, endangered the innocent, or spread disease or epidemic, public indignation was not aroused. Even at the present day there are Iroquois, no doubt, who, fancying themselves blameless victims of another's magic, feel no compunction in "sending it back."

The idea of condemning all workers of magic as witches would seem to have sprung from the white man's teaching that supernatural help from any source other than the true God is sinful. While this is a natural corollary of monotheism, it would hardly occur to the polytheistic mind of an untaught Indian who had never thought of such a thing as jealousy among gods. The early missionaries probably gave the first impetus to this change of view, but most assuredly the object lesson furnished by the agitation in the colonies, and notably in New England, had much to do with it.

When we consider that the Iroquois, in spite of their conservatism, have always shown great willingness to adopt such foreign notions as took their fancy we are less surprised at the thoroughness with which they appropriated our former beliefs, while at the same time abandoning little or nothing of their own. We long since repudiated ours; they, more consistent, have not only kept theirs, but ours as well. They borrowed from us in the first place because our conceptions confirmed and supplemented their own, and for the same excellent reason they have retained them, almost, one might say, as a sacred trust. European witchcraft was grafted so thoroughly, and so early, on the already flourishing tree of Iroquois superstition that today the point of juncture is scarcely discernible.

In his *Wonders of the Invisible World*, Cotton Mather makes the statement that "The best man living has been called a *Witch*." and probably it is no exaggeration to say that forty or fifty years ago, at Onondaga Castle, there

was not a man or woman who might not have been suspected of witchcraft by some unfriendly neighbor. Mutual distrust could have gone no farther in Salem or Fairfield in the palmiest days of their witchcraft frenzy.

Of course many Iroquois believe that magic may be legitimately used to bring success in such undertakings as hunting and love (in which pursuits, the world over, any stratagem is fair), but to employ it to injure or kill others is a crime meriting death. While it is unlikely that this extreme penalty is inflicted nowadays, the Indians profess to believe that the secret killing of witches has taken place within comparatively recent years.

What proportion of these people, forty years ago, really believed in witchcraft it would be difficult to say, for there were many with whom I never discussed the subject, but of those with whom I did discuss it (and these included educated men, one of whom was an ordained deacon) there was not one who said in so many words that he did not believe in it. Practically all welcomed the opportunity to assert their absolute belief in witchcraft, and were eager to justify it.

We are likely to forget that our own race has not entirely outgrown its belief in similar things, though often under a different name. Within the decade I have heard some excellent witch stories among the whites of New York state, and in 1917 I found in my letter box in New York City the card of a "clairvoyant," which said among other things: "What good would it do you simply to be told that you had a rival or enemy in your path, unless you were told just how to overcome them; or in case you wanted to win the love of any certain one, would you be satisfied just to be told about it? Or would you not rather know how you could win your desire?"

For our present purposes we shall use the word *witch* irrespective of gender, in the sense of either *wizard* or *witch*. It is so used by the Iroquois in speaking English,

and this was also the usage in New England at its most witch-ridden period. The fact is, that, along with the colonial witch doctrine, these Iroquois have fallen heir to much of the language that went with it, as when, on one occasion, I found a live bat pinned on the wall in the council house, I remonstrated against such needless cruelty, and was told, "Leave it alone. It's a devil's bird." I am perfectly sure, that, without some suggestion from white sources, no Indian would ever have invented such a term as "devil's bird" for a beast which he knows is not a bird at all.

The Iroquois believe that witches obtain their power by swallowing a certain kind of snake, after which they become "wild" [*bun-dat-naas'*], or, according to others, the person desiring to become a witch has to acquire the power from other witches by promising to sacrifice, as his first victim, one of his own family. Having received the desired power, he has only to wish a person some evil and it will befall him, or if during a dispute a witch should threaten or curse his antagonist he need only mean what he says to cause the malediction to take effect.

Should one person suspect another of an intention to bewitch him, he may, through a third person, beg the supposed witch to spare him. I have known instances of this, but, of course the thing must be done discreetly. It would never do, for example, to hint too strongly of witchcraft to the witch, but he or she may be told something like this: "So-and-so is afraid he offended you. He is sorry; he did not mean it, and hopes you will not hold it against him." It is presumed that the witch, thus warned that he is suspected, will not dare cast his spell.

But if authorities differ as to how the witch gains his evil power it is not surprising they should disagree as to the means he employs in using it. While some contend that mere volition suffices to accomplish his purpose, others say a variety of missiles, such as a small coal of wood neatly

sharpened at both ends ("sticks picked at both ends," Increase Mather, *Remarkable Providences*), a few straws wound with hair, or a bunch of ravelings, are "sent" or "shot" (some say from a gun, presumably a magic and noiseless one) into the body of the victim.

The Onondagas accuse the witches of St. Regis of driving a wooden peg into the ground, or into a tree or stump. The peg represents the person it is designed to injure, and, as it gradually rots, the victim wastes away and dies. Very effective charms can be worked if the witch can get hold of hair combings of the victim, or a scrap of material of which her dress is made, and for this reason, as well as for neatness, combings, ravelings, bits of thread, and small calico clippings remaining from dressmaking are carefully gathered up and burned. This also prevents some malicious person from picking them up to drop near the house of someone who is sick, which would cast suspicion on the household from which they were gathered.

But fortunately, as already intimated, there are wise men in the tribe who are so well versed in the wiles of witches that they are able to cure those bewitched by removing the magic missiles from their bodies, and sending them back if this is deemed advisable to afflict in their turn the witches themselves. For convenience we may call these men witch doctors. In the days of Increase Mather, so he tells us, white men who performed a similar function among the New England colonists were popularly known as "*white healing witches*." I knew one of the Iroquois witch doctors very well, and also many of his patients, from some of whom I received detailed accounts of his method of procedure.

Having examined the sufferer and determined the ailment to be due to witchcraft, he announces that on a certain day he will cure it, but the operation being a very exhausting one he will need to bring a younger and stronger

man to assist him; also it will be necessary to provide a pint of whiskey "to keep up their strength."

On the day appointed, everything being in readiness, the two practitioners come to the house of the afflicted, and apply to the affected part the wide end of a small horn with a hole in the tip (a cupping-horn), through which each in turn sucks vigorously, relieving the other at intervals, until they are in a profuse perspiration, nor do they neglect to renew their strength from time to time by means of the whiskey.

At last the witch doctor looks into the horn, and probing with his finger in the blood it contains, triumphantly fishes out a strange object which on close inspection is found to be the bunch of hair, yarn, or other foreign substance (the witch's charmed missile) which has been the cause of all the trouble. In one case it consisted of a blackish thing which looked like a leech. It stretched between the "doctor's" fingers to a great length, and then snapped in two. A rubber band, some thought, and this it might very well have been, for rubber bands are readily obtainable, and without doubt would answer the witch's purpose (and the witch doctor's) as well as anything else. However that may be, the mysterious malady being now traced to its cause, and the cause removed, the victim is soon restored to health.

The patient may now be asked if he wishes the *ot-kon* [the charm] "sent back," and if so the doctor promises to do this through his own power as a conjuror, if not it is destroyed by burning.

Another account of the witch doctor's method of operating I had from a Tuscarora man living at Onondaga, who was called in to act as interpreter, the patient being a Tuscarora woman who did not understand Onondaga. The old man's procedure was the same as already described except that before applying the cupping horn he scraped a fine powder from some substance which appeared to be

a white root. Mixing some of the powder in a cup of water, he gave it to his assistant to drink, and some he chewed and rubbed vigorously on his own hands and arms. After the witch's missile had been extracted the usual question was asked, but the patient was willing to let the matter drop; she did not wish the charm sent back. The old doctor then said to her: "You know who sent you this. One day on the Tuscarora reservation [near Lewiston, N. Y.] you were standing on a stile in front of your house. The board on which you stood was loose, and you were springing up and down on it to amuse the baby which you carried on your back. A man with one eye [an Indian] came by driving a yoke of oxen, and you sent the dog after them. This angered the man, and as he stepped over a ditch in a swampy field just beyond he turned and threw this at you. Your back was toward him at the time, for you were then going into the house." This exact, detailed description of a place, and of incidents concerning which it was supposed the witch doctor could know nothing, except through divination, was thought to be very marvelous.

In my belief this witch doctor was an errant impostor. He was growing old when I knew him, but his mind was still shrewd and active. I firmly believe no man on the reservation held the power that he did to injure an individual's reputation, and stir up fear and suspicion in the community. Even so, for obvious reasons, there seemed little disposition to criticize or speak ill of him or his activities.

It is said that the witches "run wild" at night with their loose hair partly concealing their faces, and that from time to time they blow flames from their mouths. They also blow flames when they are flying through the air ("a great many Indians have seen them do it"), and some think it is done to light their way. They often take the form of wolves or bears; more often at the present day of dogs,

hogs, birds, cattle, or other domestic animals, and for this reason it is regarded as an evil thing for dogs to howl, or strange animals to prowl at night, especially if accompanied by lights as, it appears, they sometimes are.

One Onondaga explained to me his theory of how the witches are able to transform themselves into animals. Every Indian has, he said, or at least had in the olden days, an animal spirit of some kind as his personal guardian. After gaining the favor and help of such an animal—a deer, a bear, or whatever the creature might be—if he wished to act secretly, to injure anyone he disliked, he could take the shape of this animal, and could then move about without being recognized or leaving visible tracks. This does not agree with the statement of another informant (which follows later) that he helped to track a wounded, metamorphosed witch for three miles.

Fortunately this very habit of wandering at night, especially in strange, or nonhuman forms, makes it comparatively easy for the witch doctor to destroy the witches by shooting them; although this is not quite so simple a matter as might be supposed. There is no little magic and mystery involved in it.

The thing is done in this way. The doctor, having first made sure that the witch or witches are active in a certain part of the reservation, arranges a hunting party. He selects a number of young men who can be trusted to keep the project a secret, for the witches must have no warning beforehand, though after the event, especially after a successful hunt, there being no further need of secrecy, the participants may, and often do relate their experiences. It was in this way I got the details of two hunts from young men who took part in them.

First we must remember that an ordinary bullet has no effect on a witch. It must contain a certain proportion of silver—that is known to everyone. It was common knowledge in Europe before the Iroquois ever heard of

silver. Secondly, the gun must be loaded secretly by the witch doctor, who is thought to employ a mysterious formula known only to him, and possibly one or two of his most confidential assistants.

Another essential is to test the courage of the hunters. The doctor fills a wooden bowl with water, and gives the young men "something that looks like bark." Each in turn puts his piece in the water at the edge of the bowl. If it drifts to the other side he is chosen to be one of the party, but if it clings to the side of the bowl and seems reluctant to cross over this is a sign that the candidate will be panic-stricken at sight of the witch, and he is rejected.

After dark, but before the witches begin their prowling, the young men, with charms which make them invisible to witches, and with guns suitably loaded, go to the place of ambush, and hide themselves in a row, in pairs, behind bushes or other concealment to wait the coming of the witch. The spot is generally near a path or road, and often, but not always in some locality not much frequented after dark.

At one end of the line is the witch doctor, at the other a trusted assistant, each provided with two hardwood sticks. These men are the watchers or scouts, who are able, through some magic power of discernment denied to ordinary mortals, to tell whether a person or animal approaching is, or is not a witch. It is important to make this distinction, for the witch may appear as an animal, or in his or her habitual form, and it is always possible an innocent person may come along even at late hours.

If the passer-by is not a witch the sentinel at the end from which he approaches signals the fact by gently tapping his sticks together. This is the signal not to shoot. Should any living thing, no matter who or what, appear in the path the hunters must shoot, doing their best to keep calm and aim straight—unless they hear the tap of the hardwood sticks. (This is the information from a par-

ticipant in one hunt; according to another, in a different hunt, they were warned to shoot at nothing but animal, or partly animal forms.) It is interesting to note that French poachers on the edge of the forest of Fontainebleau signal to each other and drive the deer to advantageous points by a similar tapping of sticks or pebbles.

One of the witch hunts mentioned may be dismissed as a relative failure. My informant saw no witch, and though others of the party, toward morning, thought they did, and fired at it, he was skeptical and inclined to believe that the witch doctor puts some magic in the guns which hypnotizes the hunters (yes, "hypnotize" was the word he used) and "makes them *think* they see these things." At any rate, in this case there was no evidence that the witch was hit by the shots.

The other hunt, which we might call Witch Hunt B, was more successful inasmuch as the witch, though not killed, was badly wounded. In this instance the ambush was laid at a point about six miles from Syracuse, on the road between that city and Cardiff, that is to say, the main thoroughfare through the reservation; the time not long before or after 1887. Cardiff was the birthplace, or at least the place of exhumation of the "stone giant," that nine days' wonder of a former generation. The Onondagas were not the only ones fooled by this stupendous hoax, and many of them believed it was the remains of one of the stone giants of their own mythology.

At the point in question the road dips down the hill toward the south, and on the east is, or was, bordered by a brush-grown "snake" (rail) fence, excellent cover for witch hunters. Just below the slope, about midway of the three quarters of a mile between the houses of *Dji-ga-na-yo'-za* (one of the two Governesses of the tribe) and "Widgeon" Johnson, was a slightly swampy place where the *skwa-ek*, [peepers] were first heard in the spring, but neither *Dji-ga-na-yo'-za* nor "Widgeon" (the last man at



Onondaga House. Oil sketch by author, about 1880. At this house a woman was wounded in Witch Hunt B.

the Castle who wore a scalplock) are involved in the story of Witch Hunt B, and as for the peepers, shrill-piping harbingers of spring, they were silent and frozen in, for it was winter.

The hunters, after a long wait, were getting shivery from cold and excitement when a strange creature made its appearance, ambling along the road on all fours. Its forward half seemed to be covered with black fur, like a bear or huge dog, while the hinder parts were those of a human being; long hair partly covered the face.

Arrived opposite my friend who gave me these details, the thing stopped and blew flames from its mouth, as though to light its way. The young fellow's heart was going "doom, doom, doom," he said, but he remembered he had been warned that witches are hard to kill and must be dealt with courageously, that the belly is the vulnerable point to aim at, and so, steadying his gun across a rail of the fence, he sighted as carefully as he could in the dim light, and fired.

He thinks it was his shot that hit the witch. The creature dashed ahead, drawing a volley of other shots as it ran, then jumped the fence on the other side of the road, and was lost to sight. An examination showed considerable blood on the fence and on the ground, and the tracks being easily followed, a pursuit was begun which carried the party up the valley, across the creek, along the west hill, back across the creek again, and finally up the Big Hill. Now the tracks showed plainly that the witch was losing strength, and a little farther on had lain down. From this point on the blood sign ceased, the tracks became like those of a human being and were soon lost in a beaten wood road.

Thus, after all, did the hunt end in disappointment. What these mild-tempered boys would have done had they really found a neighbor lying wounded in the snow at day-break I find it hard to imagine. However, the night's

work had not been devoid of result, for it seems that not far from where the trail was lost lived a woman who was known to be a witch. Just how this was "known" I cannot say—very likely "by common report," but at all events the witch was wounded in the thigh, and had been able, thus wounded, to go more than three miles, a thing no human being, not a witch, could possibly have done. It was also "known" that she was found and carried home by her brother-in-law, who was likewise a witch. In fact, "they were all witches up there," and so, of course, had no difficulty in curing her, though she was laid up for some time with what her family said was rheumatism, or something of the sort.

The noise made by tapping two hardwood sticks is not an unpleasant one; aside from its associations it might rather be described as musical.

One night I was walking down from the back country east of the council house when this mysterious xylophonic *tap-tap-tap*, not loud, but painfully clear, came from the black shadows of some small hemlocks on a brushy slope flanking my path. I knew what it was, and stopped short. Not a sound, nor a sign of life; the silent hillside stared back at me with impudent complacency. For an instant I felt insulted. Then came amusement at the thought that I had run into an ambush of witch hunters, and in so doing had upset the plans of their leader, who, to prevent a flight of debased silver in my direction, had been forced to sound his signal. In other words, the joke, if any, was on him, so having no desire to spoil what seemed to give promise of a successful hunt I walked on.

I believe—and I suspect the reader has already reached the same conclusion—that these nocturnal hunting excursions are "staged" by the witch doctor and two accomplices. There is no question that the young hunters are very much in earnest, and that they really see what they think they see; the crafty old doctor attends to that. In

the interest of his trade he must keep alive the belief in witchcraft and the fear of witches. My theory is that he first makes sure no guns are used other than those he himself has magically and secretly loaded, and that the most important part of his magic is to omit shot and ball. The hardwood sticks, in the hands of the knowing ones who are in the secret, prevent the hunters firing until the other accomplice appears disguised as the witch. To produce the flames might require some ingenuity, but the blood could be sprinkled from a bottle, or otherwise, and the remaining details would not be hard to arrange.

By no means would I imply that the perpetrators of the hoax, the witch doctor and his accomplices, do not believe in witches—of course they do. Underneath all the deception and trickery of Indian conjurers there is always the fundamental belief in the truth of what they preach. Most of the Iroquois, forty years ago, had absolute faith in these things. One Onondaga told me that about 1880 a witch was killed in a hunt of this sort on one of the Canadian reservations. "What did his friends do about it?" I asked. His reply was, "Nothing; they thought he had been at that business long enough." "And the white people?" "They didn't know it."

Although I have heard these Indians say they thought "witches ought to be hung," probably no public execution for witchcraft has occurred among them since early in the last century, when two women, self-confessed witches, were executed more or less formally by the Oneidas (according to Onondaga tradition) and there are similar reports from other tribes.

"It is no Rare thing for Witches to Confess," remarks Cotton Mather apropos of certain statements on the subject by "the Judicious Bernard of Batcomb," and in all truth they did confess in New England, but "pressing" and other methods were used to persuade them to "accept judicature," in so much that one Giles Cory was pressed to

death for his obstinacy, but in the council house at Onondaga while I was there a very respectable old "pagan" confessed quite voluntarily that he had been guilty of witchcraft at one time in his life, but had repented and given up the practice. Public confession of sins is a tenet of the Iroquois pagan faith, but whether it is of native origin is not certain. It might have been suggested by the teaching of Jesuit, or other missionaries, though it resembles most the "testifying" of certain Protestant denominations, especially the Moravians.

Many features traceable to European sources may be noticed in the foregoing account of Iroquois witchcraft, and others might be mentioned. A belief in witches' meetings is, I think, especially significant; meetings to which the witches fly. That the Indians of New England were influenced by the witch phobia of the white colonists is evident from contemporary writings, and it may be questioned whether the whites or the Indians were the more instrumental, at the beginning, in fomenting the excitement.

Hutchinson* says: "I know that Mr. Cotton Mather, in his late Folio, imputes it to the *Indian Paw-waws*, sending their Spirits amongst them; but I attribute it to Mr. Baxter's Book, and his [Cotton Mather's], and his Father's [Increase Mather's], and the false Principles, and frightful Stories that filled the People's Minds with great Fears and dangerous Notions."

Hutchinson seems to have been right in this, but the history of events in Salem shows that, once the excitement started, the Indians were not to be outdone by their white neighbors in their eagerness to contribute to it.

Robert Calef's* book gives a connected account of what happened at the start.

* Hutchinson, Francis, *An Historical Essay concerning Witchcraft*. (London: 1718).

* Calef, Robert, *More Wonders of the Invisible World*. (London: 1700; reprinted Salem, Mass.; 1796.)

Says Calef:

Mr. Parris . . . was minister at *Salem-Village*. . . . After he had been there about two years, he obtained a grant from a part of the town, that the house and land he occupied, and which had been allotted by the whole people to the ministry, should be and remain to him, &c. as his own estate in fee simple. This occasioned great divisions.

In the latter part of February, 1691, he continues:

. . . divers young persons belonging to Mr. *Parris's* family, and one or more of the neighborhood, began to act after a strange and unusual manner, viz. as by getting into holes, and creeping under chairs and stools, and to use sundry odd postures and antic gestures, uttering foolish, ridiculous speeches, which neither they themselves nor any others could make sense of.

Physicians who studied the case were completely puzzled, but one of them said he thought the children were bewitched.

March the 11th Mr. *Parris* invited several neighboring ministers to join with him in keeping a solemn day of prayer at his house. . . . A few days before this solemn day of prayer, [Here enters the Indian upon the scene.] Mr. *Parris's* Indian man and woman made a cake of rye meal, with the children's water, and baked it in the ashes, and as is said gave it to the dog; this was done as a means to discover witchcraft; soon after which those ill affected or afflicted persons named several that they saw, when in their fits afflicting them. The first complained of, was the said Indian woman *Tituba*.

She confessed, was committed to prison "and lay there till sold for her fees." Later she recanted, saying "that her master did beat her and otherways abuse her to make her confess and accuse (such as she called) her sister witches."

April 22, 1692, Edward Bishop, husbandman, was arrested with others.

The occasion of Bishop's being cried out of, was he being at an examination in Salem, when at the inn an afflicted Indian was very unruly, whom he undertook, and so managed him, that he was very orderly, after which in riding home, in company of him and other accusers, the Indian fell into a fit, and clapping hold with his teeth on the back of the man that rode before him, thereby held himself upon

the horse, but said Bishop, striking him with his stick, the Indian soon recovered, and promised he would do so no more; to which Bishop replied, that he doubted not, but he could cure them all, with more to the same effect; immediately after he was parted from them, he was cried out of. . . .

Jonathan Cary of Charlestown was present at an examination at Salem, when his wife was accused. Being greatly alarmed, he asked a trusted friend to procure him an interview with her accuser. Thinking there would not be sufficient privacy at Mr. Parris's house. He says:

We went therefore to the alehouse, where an Indian man attended us who it seemed was one of the afflicted: to him we gave some cyder, he shewed several scars, that seemed as if they had been long there, and shewed them as done by witchcraft, and acquainted us that his wife, who also was a slave, was imprisoned for witchcraft. And now instead of one accuser, they all came in, who began to tumble down like swine. . . .

On May 24, 1692, Mrs. Cary was examined and committed. Speaking of this examination, Cary's narrative continues:

The Indian before mentioned was brought in, to be one of her accusers: being come in, he now (when before the justices) fell down and tumbled about like a hog, but said nothing. The justices asked the girls [no doubt the *Visionary Girls* mentioned by Mather; quoted below] who afflicted the Indian; they answered she, (meaning my wife) and that she now lay upon him; the justices ordered her to touch him, in order to his cure, but her head must be turned another way, lest, instead of curing, she make him worse, by her looking on him, her hand being guided to take hold of his; but the Indian took hold of her hand, and pulled her down on the floor, in a barbarous manner; then his hand was taken off, and her hand put on his, and the cure was quickly wrought.

Increase Mather* tells of another "examination" at Salem. One might suppose it to be the same as the above, except that the date is more than two weeks later (June 10, 1692).

* Mather, Cotton, D.D., *The Wonders of the Invisible World*, to which is added "A Further Account of the Tryals of the New England Witches," by Increase Mather, President of Harvard College. (London: 1693, London: 1862.)

Of the afflicted there were two Girls, about 12 or 13 years of age, who saw all that was done, and were therefore called the *Visionary Girls*; they would say, *Now he, or she, or they, are going to bite or pinch the Indian*; and all there present in Court saw the visible marks on the *Indians* arms . . . at the time when one of the *Witches* was sentenc'd, and pinion'd with a Cord, at the same time was the afflicted *Indian Servant* going home, (being about 2 or 3 miles out of town,) and had both his *Wrists* at the same instant bound about with a like Cord, in the same manner as she was when she was sentenc'd, but with that violence, that the Cord entered into his flesh, not to be untied, nor hardly cut—Many *Murders* are suppos'd to be in this way committed. . . .

These *Indian slaves*, figuring both as accusers and accused, may have been captives taken by Captain Church in Philip's War. How many of them were involved in the Salem witch cases is not clear; certainly there were two, possibly four. If but two, they must have been Mr. Parris' *Indian man and woman*. In that case how came the minister's *Indian* to be dispensing drink in an alehouse? Was Mr. Parris supplementing his emoluments by keeping an alehouse? Why not? Such a thing does not seem incompatible with the customs of the day. *Autres temps, autres mœurs.*

Whether the *Indians* had any real part in developing the witch excitement in Connecticut is hard to say, but no question the people there believed they did. There was a widespread notion that witches owed their power to "*Indian gods, and spirits.*" Many of the Connecticut cases antedate the Salem troubles by several decades, and show that even in the first generation after the *Mayflower* *Indians* and whites were finding common ground in their witchcraft beliefs, however much they differed in other things.

Naturally, the furor in the colonies could not fail to spread among the surrounding tribes, and from them to their neighbors. Hutchinson bears witness to this in the following words:

That you may see what ill Effect such Notions would have, and What Disgrace they would bring upon our Nation, if they were again to prevail, I will give you an Instance of the Opinion which the Poor Indians in America had of the Independent English in New England, upon account of their Notions in this Respect. It seems in Saco-Fort, the French came after the English; and Captain Hill gave the following Account of what he had heard there. See a Certificate of it in the 25th page of Mr. Calef's *More Wonders of the Invisible World*. An Indian told him, "*That the French Ministers were better than the English; for before the French came among them, there were a great many Witches among the Indians, but now there were none: And there were much Witches among the English Ministers, as Burroughs who was hang'd for it.*"

There is one characteristic of Iroquois witchcraft not commonly found in the witch tales of Massachusetts, though more prevalent in the earlier cases in Connecticut, and that is lycanthropy, or its equivalent, for, there being no longer any wolves in central New York, witches, now, are more often believed to assume the guise of animals seen daily in the neighborhood. Probably the original native belief was very like the European werewolf superstitions, and the Indians gladly availed themselves of the silver bullet to rid the country of such dreaded creatures.

It is hard to define the westernmost limits of the Puritan, or European, idea of witchcraft, diabolism, and hell as distinguished from the aboriginal belief in magic and "medicine" making, but in western Ohio and eastern Indiana, in 1806, we find Tecumseh and his twin brother, the Prophet (like Sitting Bull eighty-four years later) utilizing "Christian" doctrines to propagate a new Indian religion and undo the work of Christian missionaries. They preached the very un-Indian innovation of hell and damnation for all who rejected their teaching, and denounced and executed as witches many of their opponents, notably one Joshua, a Mahican Indian born in 1741 at Wequadrach, the Moravian mission of Gnadensee, in Dutchess County, New York.

Though burnt ostensibly as a witch—like other saints and martyrs that might be mentioned—this remarkable man was really sacrificed to remove his Christianizing influence.

Remarkable he surely was. Master of Indian dialects, he also spoke—and wrote—English and German. He read much, was a clever mechanic, could build a spinet, played that instrument and the organ, and acted as chapel musician and interpreter in the mission churches of the United Brethren (Moravians). During his ordeal he prayed and sang in a language which the Shawnees, his tormentors, could not understand. This undoubtedly was German.

It is interesting here to note that the Moravians themselves had helped to furnish their enemies with a weapon of their own fashioning which could be, and in fact was, used against them; they had recognized the existence, and forbidden the use of *Trchappich* (or witchcraft) in hunting, etc.

Naturally, the witchcraft beliefs of those tribes which came early under European influence, at a time when such belief was well-nigh universal among white men, show greatest similarity with those of Europe, but such similarity does not exist among tribes of the remote interior whose first knowledge of our customs was gained after we had ceased to believe in witches.

As already intimated, the Onondagas—most of them—took their witchcraft seriously forty years ago, and many tried to convert me to their way of thinking. One young man said to me reproachfully, "You don't believe in witches [*De-ga-nuns-ge*]?" "No," I answered, "I do not. I have never seen people flying through the air and blowing flames from their mouths." "Well, *I* have," he replied gravely, "and some night I shall show them to *you*." This young fellow was no untutored child of nature, and he was no fool. He had been to school off the reservation, had lived for a time in New York City, had met and con-

versed with people of culture, and at the period of which I speak he was manager of the Indian baseball nine. But there was no doubt of his sincerity. It was he, in fact, who wounded the witch in Witch Hunt B, or at least he believed he did, and there were others also who credited him with it. However, I never had the fortune, good or bad, of viewing the promised phenomenon.

Of course many believers in witchcraft are ignorant, but others are intelligent, educated men and women. I have heard a Christian Tuscarora quote Scripture to prove his point as glibly as either of the Mathers, and make use of the same quotations, too, for there are not many to choose from. I have heard an Englishman, an Oxford graduate, do the same, not to prove that witches now exist, for he was inclined to doubt this, but that there once were witches.

While we may laugh at the credulity of our Indian neighbors, it is well to bear in mind that some of our own intellectuals in this twentieth century believe that one may be injured in bodily or mental health, or even killed by "malicious animal magnetism." No need to give names of persons who are thought to have been so slain, but it is certain that, reinforced and modernized by such present-day catchwords as "clairvoyance," "telepathy," "hypnotism," and especially "malicious animal magnetism," the old arguments in favor of magic and witchcraft take on a new authority, if not validity. With such refurbishing they are really about as good as they ever were—for those having the "Magical Faith." But the magical faith is the prerequisite, the *sine qua non*.

The steadfast faith of the Iroquois Onondagas in the face of our protests and ridicule recalls the fable of

The Man Who Taught His Dog To Fetch.

There was a certain Man who made sundry Feints and Passes with a Stick, which his Dog taking to be Magic, would right gladly run

after the Stick whithersoever the Man threw it, even though it fell in the Water, and fetch it again, whereby the Dog gained great credit with the Man, who ever patted him on the Head and said, "Good Dog."

Howbeit, one day, the Man, thinking to Dynamite Fish, cast a Stick of Explosive into a likely Pool, and stepped back as he thought to a Place of Safety, whereupon the Dog jumped into the Water, and though the Man said, "No! No!" straightway brought the Dynamite, its Fuse still sputtering, which the more the Man would have prevented, the Dog sought to lay at his Feet.

Moral: Do not teach a Dog what you may later wish him to forget; a good Dog never forgets.

The Iroquois are here likened to the faithful dog only for the sake of the parallel. Faithful they have been, but theirs was never the docile fidelity of man's best friend. We as a people are changeable. Our heresy of today may be our orthodoxy tomorrow, or vice versa. We have outgrown our belief in witchcraft; we disown it, we are ashamed of it. Unworthy descendants of our Puritan forefathers, we have listened to the Calefs and the Hutchinsons, we have yielded to the assaults of "Modern Sadducism" [Mather]; but Onondaga—Incorruptible Custodian of the Middle Fire—Onondaga has kept the faith.



Orthography of Indian Words

The futility of attempting to record any unwritten language by using our alphabet "as in English" must be obvious to most readers.

To avoid this difficulty the Indian names and words in this book, with one or two exceptions, have been spelled approximately as recommended by Major J. W. Powell in his *Introduction to the Study of Indian Languages*, though no effort has been made to indicate the subtler inflections in pronunciation by the use of inverted letters and other devices, as this would complicate the subject beyond the purpose of this volume.

I venture to assert, however, that if the reader will master the system here used and try these words on an Indian speaking the language he will find himself understood. This is vastly more than can be said of Indian words written "as in English."

The letters are pronounced as follows, the vowels having, in general, the same value as in the Continental or Latin languages:

a as in *far*, *father*.
ā as in *bat*, *man*.
â as in *law*, *all*.
ai as in *aisle*, as *i* in *pine*.
au as *ou* in *out*.

b as in *blab*.
c as *sh* in *shall*.
d as in *dread*.
e as *ey* in *they*.
ě as in *then*.

f as in *fife*.

g as in *gig*.

h as in *he*, *hoot*.

i as in *pique*.

ĩ as in *pick*.

j as *z* in *azure*.

k as in *kick*.

l as in *lull*.

m as in *mum*.

n as in *nun*.

o as in *note*, *most*.

p as in *pipe*.

q as *ch* in German *ich*.

r as in *roaring*.

s as in *sauce*.

t as in *touch*.

u as *oo* in *too*.

ü as in *pull*.

û as in *but*.

v as in *valve*.

w as in *will*.

y as in *you*.

z as in *zone*.

dj as *j* in *judge*.

hw as *wh* in *when*.

tc as *ch* in *church*.

Prolongation of a vowel is marked
thus: *a+*, *e+*.

Nasalized vowels are followed by
n, thus: *an*, *en*, *on*.

Syllables are separated by hyphens.

The accented syllable of a word is
marked by an apostrophe, thus:

Hi-ban-ma-ko'-ti-la.

